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New Statesman

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JAGGER: just keeps rolling along

Miners' strike: 11th week

THE UNDESERVING POOR

Images of poverty in Britain

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New Statesman

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FEMINIST PUBLISHING

To coincide with the Feminist Book Fair (7-9 June at the Jubilee Hall, Covent Garden, London) the NS's books pages (8 June issue) will be offering:

- A look at the present state of feminist/women's publishing, by **Gillian Hanscombe**
- A review by **Sara Maitland** of assorted recent books by, for and about women
- **Jean Radford** reviewing Juliet Mitchell's latest book
- A report from the US by **Barbara Smith** of the Kitchen Table co-operative in New York
- Some **factual information** about the Book Fair

To advertise in this special issue, telephone Michael Roberts or David Jones on 01-253 2001. Deadline for bookings Friday 1 June.

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New Statesman Vol 107 No 2775 25 May 1984

Where is the strike going?

THE MINERS' strike is now coming up to the three month mark. It is difficult to avoid military analogy when discussing it, although it remains an undeclared war — for the NUM has not held a national strike ballot and the Coal Board sparked off the explosion by announcing the closure of Cortonwood colliery.

First there was the phoney war, when for 19 weeks the miners limited themselves to the partial tactic of an overtime ban. Now we have what looks like a continuing long summer of a war of attrition, costing millions of pounds a week and involving massed armies of pickets and police on either side, managing only to hold their respective grounds, or at best gain a few feet.

In no sane society or political system would a rational government or a rational NUM have allowed themselves to get into the present desperate position. The government provoked the crisis in the direct sense that it set short-term financial targets for the National Coal Board that could only be met by the irrational closure — against specific recent promises and against the wishes of local Coal Board officials — of Cortonwood in South Yorkshire. That was the shot that gave the majority on the national executive of the NUM the national support that they were seeking for confrontation with the government.

It was a deliberate act and it was part of a deliberate strategy. The NUM has long had a particular pride of place in Tory demonology concerning trade unions, strengthened by episodes like the 1972 and 1974 miners' strikes. But more particularly, Mrs Thatcher was persuaded by her colleagues to back down on the issue of cutting the subsidy to the coal industry during her first term of office. It has been one of her relatively few major losses of political face and it has conditioned her attitude to the industry and to the NUM ever since.

Because of the way in which the industry drifted into what is in effect a national strike, it has never been made explicit what the NUM would regard as an acceptable 'victory'. The slogans that have featured in the speeches and statements from the miners' national executive about full continued operation of all workable pits for ever, giving continuing employment to the children and grandchildren of the existing mining workforce, do not have the ring of credibility. On the political side, the hope strongly implied by Arthur Scargill and those close to him that the miners, if they stand united, have it in their power to achieve what the Labour Party were unable to achieve, namely the removal of the Thatcher government, seems at the moment equally remote from political reality.

The damage that in fact has been done along the way to trade union solidarity is incidentally distressing. Arthur Scargill clearly has a Yorkshire contempt for Nottingham miners and it has been showing. The failed attempt to stop steel production at Ravenscraig, as we report on page 11, has seriously undermined the effectiveness of the Tripple Alliance in Scotland and indeed throughout the rest of the country. In short, for their part the miners seemed at the outset to have become committed to a campaign where the costs were high, the risks of failure even higher and the achievable goals still very unclear.

BUT IN LONG campaigns the war aims of those involved almost always undergo change. In this process several factors are now at work. The first is the realisation in government that the tactic of using a crude outsider, NCB chairman Ian MacGregor, to beat the NUM into submission cheaply has failed. Whatever the outcome of the dispute MacGregor will have to go and the industry will have to return to its much more consensual style of traditional management.

The second is the growing realisation that the new Tory employment laws have been wholly irrelevant to what has been going on. In mid-March the NCB successfully applied for an injunction against the Yorkshire flying pickets, but wisely it has never tried to get it enforced. When they have chosen to act within the law at all in dealing with pickets, the police have used old provisions against obstruction. The police have made it quite clear that the last thing they would want was the job of trying to arrest thousands of mobile pickets defying a court injunction.

The third factor is that the unity of the miners has not lessened as the weeks have gone by. The government's hope that Scargill and the majority on the executive would become increasingly isolated has been dashed. The right-wing miners' leaders in whom such hope was placed have failed to come up with an alternative strategy for their members on the issues of pit closures, redundancy levels, or even the still disputed wage settlement. In large part this is because Ian MacGregor has given them no room by his continued flat insistence on his centrally directed plan to close 20 pits and cut a further 20,000 jobs.

The strike in fact has produced an increase and spread of militancy, rather than the reverse. The leadership has been under considerable pressure from the young militants in Scotland and in the Yorkshire and Kent areas. This factor has been consistently underestimated by those who wish to see the whole event as an extention of Scargill's ego and political ambitions.

They forget how democratic a union the NUM really is. MORI's poll, published in the *Sunday Times* on 15 April, showed 68 per cent of miners for a strike and only 26 against. Since then the Tories have made much less of their calls for a national strike ballot. Even more surprising, in view of the traditional male image of mining, has been the way in which the women from mining communities have organised their own support and participation in the strike. This increased cohesion and militancy is a monument to MacGregor's managerial incompetence.

After all this, the only terms that the miners could accept would be a change in the criteria that the NCB is apply in deciding when a pit is no longer economic and should close. This means a higher subsidy from the government (though still a subsidy far lower than that given, for example, to farmers). At present British subsidies to coal are low by international standards — about £3.20 a tonne, compared to £8.60 in West Germany and £17.20 in France.

Domestic coal remains one of this country's most valuable natural resources. We shall be depending on it long after North Sea oil and gas have run out. It is cheaper and safer than nuclear fuel. The NUM under Arthur Scargill will not bring the Tory government down directly. But at great collective and individual cost it is on its way to achieving a key objective. As a result of this strike the government must accept its responsibility for playing a key part in planning the future of a healthy coal industry to take this country into the next century. □

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Who is paying for the miners' dispute?

THE MUCH-PUBLICISED policing operation is not the main cost to the government of the coal strike. The National Coal Board's biggest customer, the Central Electricity Generating Board, is having to fork out an extra £20m per week to use more expensive alternative fuel. The question of who pays for that is now the subject of a battle between the government and the electricity industry.

There are two choices. The cost could be passed on to electricity consumers in England and Wales, the area served by the CEGB, or the Department of Energy could lower the amount of profit it requires the CEGB to make, hiding the true cost.

CEGB chairman Sir Walter Marshall aired the issue a fortnight ago, suggesting that electricity costs would have to rise 1.5 per cent a month while the dispute lasts. Marshall's remark brought a sharp rebuke from Energy Secretary Peter Walker. Loading the cost of the dispute in this way straight on to electricity bills would make the expense too visible to the electorate.

One way out is to allow the CEGB to absorb the cost from the money the electricity industry would otherwise have made in excess of the Department of Energy's requirement. In 1982/83 this 'over-achievement' was about £500 million. In 1983/84 it will be less because of the strike, but will probably not have been wiped out. And there is plenty of scope for altering the 1984/85 figure to fit.

The extra costs arise because the CEGB has been forced to abandon its 'merit order' system of operation — the pattern of loading demand onto the most cost-effective stations to reduce the cost of operating the CEGB system to the minimum. The bulk of CEGB operating cost is fuel. The stations with most 'merit' are nuclear, followed usually by coal and, well behind, oil. Nuclear stations have most 'merit' only because they have the cheapest fuel, but they are expensive to build.

Instead, the CEGB has been made to use its large oil-fired power stations, which are normally run below capacity. These stations are at coastal sites and are designed to run on imported oil. To fuel them, the CEGB has had to resort to the spot oil market in Rotterdam just as prices are rising because of the missile attacks on tankers in the Persian Gulf.

In addition, the CEGB is having trouble getting available coal to power stations. Coal is normally sent from mines to the nearest power station. Some large stations like Ratcliffe-on-Soar in Nottinghamshire are close to working mines. But key stations like Drax, Eggborough, Ferrybridge and Didcot are not. This means that even the 'merit' order for coal-fired stations has had to be abandoned.

The CEGB is receiving over 500,000 tonnes of coal a week (up from 300,000 earlier in the dispute) and burning about the same. Its coal burn has been down to 300,000 tonnes some weeks, and could fall below this level in midsummer, when heating loads are reduced and factories closed for holidays.

So even widespread success by NUM pickets would not lead to blackouts for electricity consumers for many months. Coal burning at power stations, and the deterioration of some stock, have only brought stocks down from 24 to 16 million tonnes since the strike began.

There is no prospect of help from the power station workforces, who have never struck against closures of power stations, let alone pits.

One body which is set to make a financial killing from the strike is the South of Scotland Electricity Board, which is exporting as much power as it can to the CEGB. The Scottish electricity system runs almost entirely on nuclear and hydro power and is little affected by the dispute. The huge Inverkip oil-fired station, mothballed the day it was finished, has not even been brought into use.

Martin Ince

Travellers fare badly

IT SEEMS amazing that anyone should fight for the right to live on this barren wasteland caught between two motorways, but the 200 resident travellers are resisting eviction from the Hammersmith site. It is the only official provision for travellers in West London but Hammersmith & Fulham Council has long been trying to close the site and has recently applied to the DoE to do so. Last year, it lost a similar court case but it now claims to have looked unsuccessfully in the area for another site. The Westway Site Support Group which is fighting the case agrees that the site should be closed but only if another one is found which, it claims, is quite possible. 'So much money has been spent on legal cases trying to evict the travellers over the last four years that it could have easily paid for a well-provided new site', said a spokesperson for the group. ●

Boards up against the chop

ALL THREE enterprise boards created by the metropolitan county councils intend to outlive their parent bodies, should the plan to abolish the councils go ahead.

This week, in a bid to ensure its survival, the West Midlands Enterprise Board (WMEB) announced it intends to launch a £4m unit trust fund in the autumn to raise money from pension funds and charities. It already has £2.5m invested from the pension funds of five London boroughs and London Transport, as well as direct grants from the County Council, making a total of £10m.

The aim of the boards is to stimulate local industry, investing in companies which have failed to obtain capital from conventional sources. However, the WMEB stresses that it makes investments on the basis of sound financial criteria. It reckons it has created over 2,200 jobs by investing in medium-sized companies (which employ more than 100 people) at a cost of about £3,500 per job. Only two of its investments have failed, with losses of £850,000 of WMEB money.

The West Yorkshire Enterprise Board (WYEB) is more conventionally funded having secured, as well as grants from its parent council, a £10m medium-term loan. Managing director Alan Pickering told the *New Statesman*: 'Of course the abolition of West Yorkshire will cause problems but our future is sound. We intend to continue our programme of investment of £3 million per year and we have already looked at the possibility of replacing the West Yorkshire representatives on our board with nominees from the district councils.' In its first 17 months of operation, WYEB saved or created 1,400 jobs through investing £3m.

The Merseyside Enterprise Board was only created in February but hopes to obtain 'private funding from pension funds or local industry' should the county council be abolished.

However, the future of the Greater London Enterprise Board (GLEB), the largest board, is unclear as the GLC has not committed itself to the Board's future should abolition go ahead. GLEB has so far invested £31.6 million, including £18½m in property, claiming 2,000 jobs to its credit. But a spokesperson said that no decisions had been made over its continued independent future. Unlike WYEB and WMEB, it has obtained all its funding from its parent council.

The White Paper outlining the plans to abolish the metropolitan county councils (MCCs) and the GLC, *Streamlining the cities*, said 'no specific arrangements are required to replace the role of the GLC and the MCCs in assisting local industry'. But, ironically, should the enterprise boards become self-sufficient, they will cause less trouble to the government during the abolition process. If they are not able to finance themselves, the government would be compelled, at least morally, to step in to try to ensure the future of the companies which have received investment funds from the board.

Alan Travis and Christian Wolmar

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Ten more years for prison lifer

THE THREE-WEEK long Parkhurst prison siege trial ended on Monday in Winchester Crown Court. The two defendants, John Bowden and Jimmy McCaig, were found guilty on three charges: falsely imprisoning the Isle of Wight prison's assistant governor Gerry Scholfield on 4 and 5 January 1983; and two further charges of threatening to kill him.

Throughout the trial, which was largely ignored in the national press, both defendants cited their personal grievances and the conditions in British prisons as the reason for the action. On 4 January they went, armed with small hobby knives, to Gerry Scholfield's office and took him hostage. The siege lasted over 28 hours. The men surrendered peacefully as soon as their demands were met — to see a barrister, Mike Mansfield, a journalist, Roger Beam, and for McCaig to see his ex-wife.

The background to the trial is the growing pressure inside prisons in the face of increasingly strict regimes and, as Bowden said during the trial, 'the hopelessness of doing an infinite sentence'. Bowden is serving life with a minimum recommended term of 25 years. 'If all went well', he said, 'I will be out in the year 2006.'

In evidence, John Bowden accused Albany (Isle of Wight) prison staff, where he was first held, of showing 'horrific' forensic photographs from his original trial to other inmates to 'incite hostility' towards him. Similar allegations of prison officers using such material against particular prisoners have been made in the past. Bowden said he feared that as a result he would be seriously assaulted and forced 'to kill or be killed'. He said when he was transferred to Parkhurst this fear grew.

Bowden made it clear that the hostage-taking was also designed to draw attention to the general complaints of long-term prisoners: use of solitary confinement; arbitrary and frequent transfer; forced drugging; the use of riot squads and the absence of any effective internal or external means of airing and resolving prisoners' grievances. He said that 'a prison system has emerged which is in itself criminal and unlawful' and he warned of a British Attica within the next five years.

Jimmy McCaig's part in the hostage-taking — despite having only 14 months of a four year sentence left to serve — was, he said, his fear of being sent without justification to a secure mental hospital and the refusal of the Prison Department to transfer him to Scotland so he could receive family visits. McCaig claimed that Parkhurst was known for sending people to Rampton or Broadmoor. He described the prison doctor, Dr Cooper, as Doctor Death and said that 'nutting off' (certifying prisoners) was so common that such prisoners were known as 'Cooper's troopers'.

Barrister Mike Mansfield gave evidence which indicated that the prison authorities had unnecessarily lengthened the siege. He said that the prison had taken no steps to contact him. He described the delay in letting him see Bowden as 'foolhardy' because the assistant governor's life and the lives of the two prisoners were at stake.

John Bowden was given concurrent sentences of 10 years, five years and five years respectively. Jimmy McCaig received seven years, three years and three years, also concurrent. McCaig also received a sentence of nine months for escaping from Canterbury prison last November.

Terry O'Halloran

MISCELLANY

Driving off Alf

Sir Alfred Sherman, currently on sabbatical leave from the Centre of Policy Studies, the Tory Right's think tank, is a noted advocate of converting railways into roads. But is that why he is so keen to turn the doomed Marylebone station into a coach terminal? In the House of Commons last week Labour's junior transport spokesperson Peter Snape interrupted Liberal MP Stephen Ross's attack on Sherman. Was Ross aware, he asked, that Sir Alf lives in Gerald Road? 'The coaches to and from Victoria coach station pass the end of the street. That infuriates him and makes him even more determined to proceed with his scheme to turn Marylebone into a coach station.' Ross replied: 'I understand that recently Sir Alfred went on a trip to South America. It would be better for all of us if he were to stay there.' Now, converting the Amazon into a 112-lane motorway would be a real challenge.

Mushroom clouds

Back in those more enlightened days of the late '70s, one of our readers studying for a science degree wrote to the Home Office requesting information about hallucinogenic fungi. The reply from a Mr N. Shackleford was extremely helpful. It explained, among other things, that psilocybe mushrooms were not illegal unless attempts were made to extract the drug by chemical process. For further information, Mr Shackleford enclosed a copy of *A guide to British Psilocybin Mushrooms*, published by Hassle Free Press. Strange then that this very same publication should be one of the subjects of prosecution currently being heard at the Old Bailey and brought by the DPP under the Obscene Publications Act. If the prosecution is successful, will the Home Office then have itself prosecuted for distributing obscene publications in a glorious act of repentance?

Goldsmiths' dries up

Richard Hoggart may not be on the side of his students at Goldsmiths' college (in the sixth day of their occupation at the time of going to press), but it seems that the Thames Water Authority are. A burst mains water pipe has deprived the whole college of running water — except for the administration block which up to 70 students at a time are occupying in protest at the threatened redundancies and course changes in the department of visual communications (see *NS* 11 May). When desperate college authorities arrived to negotiate at 11 pm last Sunday, it was not clear whether they were driven by embarrassment at the row, or mere thirst. Among their embarrassments was the presence of four students at a public college lecture last Thursday on 'The Power of the Press', given by Hoggart's son — the jovially lightweight Simon. We are sad to report that he sat in glassy-eyed silence while they made their case. The following morning students practised the theory of press power by reading out our last Miscellany item on the dispute through a loudspeaker to Richard Hoggart and assembled colleagues on the other side of a locked door.

Paper figures

As the Battle for the *Morning Star* enters its last phase — the various regional AGMs of the owning People's Press Printing Society are in two weeks' time — the *Star* leaders are running out of secret weapons to deploy. So far they have wheeled in the Soviet Union, which resumed paying for its copies with an annual sum for the first time since the British Communist Party criticised the invasion of Czechoslovakia; they have enforced a 350-word rule on letters criticising the *Star*'s policy, but allowed letters criticising 'euro-communists' to ramble on interminably; a *Star* editorial claimed an awe-inspiring circulation increase of 1,000 — which is odd given the published distribution figures show a net drop of 1,000 since this time last year; and they have quietly abolished the AGM in Wales. The Welsh Communist Party has backed the CPGB leadership, not the *Star*'s. Meanwhile, hinting they fear a National Front take-over, the PPPS has been busily rejecting applications for shares on printed forms which CP members have, as is customary, distributed. The PPPS office claims they are photocopies. It is expected the *Star* management will reveal at the AGMs more details of their plans to make the *Star* a tabloid. It is hoped they will explain why they told the NGA chapel it would have 12 pages, but the NUJ chapel only eight.

Housey-housey

The Housing and Building Control Bill has been flying to and fro between the two houses of Parliament with increasing speed. Last week, the Lords rejected the Commons's amendments to the Bill which would have given some tenants of homes specially adapted for the elderly the right to buy. This was the second time that the Lords had rejected such a scheme and it gave us the following gem from the order paper: 'Lords amendment to a commons amendment in lieu of a Lords amendment. Lords reason for insisting on a Lords amendment and disagreeing to commons amendments in lieu thereof. And Lords reason for disagreeing to commons amendments to Lords amendments'. Enough to send any lord reaching for the bottle.

Unto Caesar

Pity poor Brompton Oratory. Strapped for cash to fund its ambitious restoration programme, it has been forced to sell one of its treasures, a 14th century Flemish triptych ascribed to the master of the St Ursula Legend, worth £1 to 2 million. But, when the good fathers of the church asked for it back from the V & A where it had been held for safekeeping, the V & A couldn't find it. One can imagine the good fathers' reaction, since they were already committed to auctioning the piece at Sotheby's. Meanwhile, scenes of mad panic at the V & A, until one bright spark remembered that some time ago another triptych had been lent to Leeds Castle for an exhibition. It had been in the same room in which the Flemish piece had been stored... and it was a very big packing case that was despatched. A functionary was ordered poste haste to Kent. Inside the case he did indeed find two triptychs. From such incidents do stories of miraculous conceptions grow.

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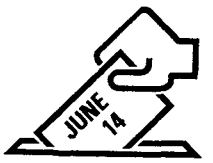
Luxembourg 1, Euro-parliament 0



THE EURO-ELECTION manifestos of the Labour and Conservative parties, published this week, omit any mention of how to make the European Parliament itself more efficient — or how to end the present absurd situation in which the Parliament seems powerless to organise its staff in the way it wants.

At present, the Parliament works in three places: Strasbourg, where MEPs meet in full plenary session one week a month; Brussels, where committees meet two weeks a month; and Luxembourg, where most of the staff is located.

Until two years ago the problem was even worse: the Parliament divided its plenary meetings between Luxembourg and Strasbourg. Then members voted to transfer all full sessions to Strasbourg. But the Parliament's staff in Luxembourg, 100 miles from Strasbourg, stayed there.

A recent internal paper by the Parliament's Secretary-General described 'the extremely widespread feeling of frustration and isolation among officials and other servants who are not required to travel, never meet Members of Parliament and regard their work as marginal and futile'. His report recorded that 'since the 1979 direct elections this situation has deteriorated considerably'.

The proposed solution was to begin transferring some of the 1,000 staff dealing with plenary business to Strasbourg, instead of forcing them to make the expensive monthly trek between the two cities. A report to this effect was first approved by the Parliament three years ago, when it decided to stop meeting in Luxembourg. Then, in March 1983, with nothing having happened, Parliament instructed the secretariat to prepare plans to move staff.

But still nothing happened. Luxembourg resisted the move, and took its case to the European Court of Justice. Last month the Court ruled that the staff must continue to be based in Luxembourg. This decision did not arise out of any evidence that this was the best way for Parliament to function: no such evidence was offered. Instead, the Court ruled that while Parliament could choose where to meet, it had no powers to decide where to base its staff. This was a matter for agreement among the governments of member states and the Parliament had no right to usurp their powers.

The financial cost of sustaining the travelling circus is £14 million a year. The cost in terms of staff efficiency is far higher. But it could be that the cost to the credibility of the Parliament and its capacity to take effective decisions, could be the greatest of all.

Peter Kellner

Sting in the tail of private plans

TORY COUNCILS could be in for a financial shock. A recent High Court decision means they could be paying out millions of pounds in compensation to staff who have lost their jobs as a result of privatisation.

Four Wandsworth Council gardeners, formerly employed by the GLC, were awarded compensation last week after they had lost their jobs when gardening services were given to a private firm, Pritchards.

The High Court set aside an earlier decision in favour of the Council, awarding costs against the Council, which is considering an appeal. Afterwards, NUPE's divisional officer Ian Scott said the gardeners were now entitled to up to £4,000 a year compensation until age 65, in addition to a lump sum. This would cost the Council over £150,000.

The gardeners were successful in their claim because at the time of the transfer of housing responsibilities from the GLC to the London boroughs in 1980, a statute was passed ensuring compensation for staff who lost their jobs because of the transfer. Wandsworth Council failed to convince the court that the job losses were solely due to a change in council policy.

Now NUPE is set to lodge similar claims on behalf of 36 former GLC caretakers in Roehampton who could be made redundant as a result of Wandsworth privatising caretaking services. If NUPE is successful, it could cost the Council well over £1 million. NUPE also plans to ask London boroughs for lists of staff who have lost their jobs since the handover, who may also be able to claim long-term compensation.

Quentin McDermott

Updates

Gay's The Word

The Customs and Excise relented slightly last week by returning 600 books to the North London-based Gay's The Word bookshop, which had passed their censorship test (see *NS* 20 April). However, 314 books (34 titles) and the shop's business records are still being held. Those that failed the test and which are now being read by senior customs officials include *The joy of lesbian sex*; *Aphrodisiac*, published by Chatto; a gay detective thriller *From violent men*; and *The hunger*, the novel of the film.

'Most of the stuff they're still holding is like Harold Robbins in a gay context and W.H. Smiths sells that,' said Paud Hegerty of GTW. The Customs also appears to be preventing US imports from reaching GTW. Of £11,000 worth of orders since November, only three sacks have arrived, with an estimated 30 sacks having been delayed. Normally, deliveries take just six weeks.

Alliance rift

A major rift in the Alliance was averted at the last minute by the withdrawal of the two SDP candidates in the forthcoming council by-election in Newham (see last week's *NS*). Following the personal intervention of David Owen, who threatened to expel the candidates (who were contesting the seat against two incumbent Liberals) from the SDP if they did not stand down, both withdrew their nomination papers five minutes before the deadline at 12 noon on Friday. One, Virginia Taylor, has subsequently resigned from the party in protest.

Earlier, the Liberals' chief agent John Holmes had written to the SDP warning that should the two candidates not pull out or at least be disowned by the SDP, the future of the Alliance would be in doubt. The London region of the Liberal Party made it plain that it would withdraw from the Alliance and other regions might follow.

Beachcombers beware

LOCAL RESIDENTS' delight over the recent reopening of the beaches around Sellafield (Windscale) was tempered somewhat by the warning issued by the Department of the Environment 'not to pick things up'. As an attempt to rescue the collapsing tourist trade, it seems a non-starter.

The DoE has been under considerable pressure from Copeland Borough Council (almost one quarter of whose councillors are employed by British Nuclear Fuels) and the local MP John Cunningham to reopen the beaches after the leak of radioactivity in November. However, the Windscale pipeline, through which radioactive waste is discharged, is the cause of the continued reluctance to give the all-clear as bits of bitumen from the inside of one of the outflow pipes have been turning up on the beach.

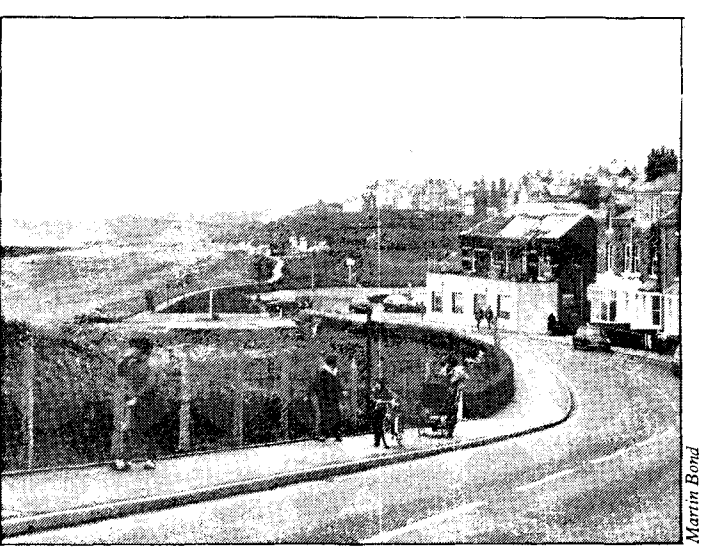
Sellafield discharges radioactivity into the sea via three pipelines (see *NS* 18 November 1983) and has been identified as the most likely cause of the excess of cancer in several coastal parishes.

Although reaction among many people in nearby Seascale to these findings has been one of outright hostility, local people are becoming increasingly willing to discuss the issue and voice their fears. The West Cumbria Beach Campaign has been formed to monitor the activities of BNF and is successfully mobilising public support for the Greenpeace demand of zero discharges. Funds are also being raised for a Geiger counter so that locals can do their own monitoring — a facility which even the DoE does not enjoy.

A Beach Campaign was recently addressed by Dr Rosalie Bertell, a bio-statistician from the US. She is an expert on the effects of low level radiation and her latest findings point to an increase in baby deaths following the arrival of nuclear power plants in Wisconsin. This is important because it confirms other evidence on the heightened vulnerability of the human foetus to low levels of radiation — evidence which is enshrined in the medical practice of allowing only minimal X-raying of pregnant women.

Yet such research into low level radiation has often been attacked and research funds, as in the case of Dr Bertell, been withdrawn.

Ruth Balogh



Martin Bond

Seascale, Cumbria: The beach is open again, but you musn't 'pick things up'

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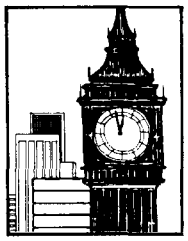

PETER KELLNER Political Editor

Beware of strangers bearing anti-Tory pacts

IT MAY JUST be that we are entering the period when the passions generated by the last general election are wearing off, and the passions over the next one have yet to take hold. But whatever the reason, some curious notions are beginning to gain currency. It is time they were scotched.

One particular idea that has acquired momentum during the past few weeks is that there should be an anti-Thatcher pact: an arrangement for Alliance candidates to stand down for Labour ones in some seats, and for Labour to stand down in others, so that the party with the best chance of beating the Tory in each case would have a clear run. Even though no political leader will touch the idea, and only one Labour back-bencher, Frank Field, has come anywhere near commending it publicly, it has become fashionable for the scribbling classes to advocate a pact.

The hare started running last autumn when the historian Eric Hobsbawm, in an article in *Marxism Today*, appeared to propose a popular front. I say 'appear' because Hobsbawm has since made it clear that he sees a popular front as a possible tactical device for drawing the SDP into a bear-hug which would eventually destroy it, leaving Labour once again as the dominant party of the Left.

Then, two months ago Christopher Huhne, a *Guardian* journalist and former SDP candidate, presented an item on Channel Four's *Diverse Reports*. The calculations that underlay his advocacy appeared in a full-page report by Professor Ivor Crewe in the *Guardian*. Since then scarcely a week has passed without some well-meaning commentator arguing along the lines that 'if only the parties to the left of the Tories could somehow combine forces, they could defeat Thatcher'.

Arithmetically, the argument runs something like this. Take Derby North as an illustration. It was one of the seats Labour lost last June, when Phillip Whitehead lost by 3,506 votes to the Conservative, Greg Knight, who became the first Tory to win a Derby seat since 1935. However, if you add the Labour and Liberal votes together, they totalled 6,418 more than the Conservative. Suppose the Liberal had stood down in Labour's favour: the Tory would have been defeated, and the popular, moderate and talented Whitehead (a judgment that has nothing to do with the fact that he is a director of the *New Statesman*) would still be an MP.

Or would he? In the absence of a Liberal candidate, it takes an heroic assumption to say that all his support would have gone to Labour. All polling evidence taken during the last election suggests that Alliance supporters hated Tory and Labour in roughly equal numbers. Still, let us assume that the fact that a Liberal decision to step down in Labour's favour would have weighed to some extent with the voters of Derby. Suppose 10 per cent of committed Liberals had abstained, but that the other 90 per cent would have divided two-to-one in Whitehead's favour. It would have been a closer race, but Knight would still have won. And, for what it's worth, my guess is that the division of the Liberal vote would not have been so favourable to Labour.

In seats where Labour stood down for the Alliance, it is likely that Labour supporters would have switched in far greater numbers to the Alliance than to the Tories. Overall, a reasonable guesstimate is that a Labour-Alliance pact last June would have been worth 15 extra seats to Labour and 40 extra seats to the Alliance; but the Tories would still have won with an overall majority of 38: hardly a landslide, but still a working majority.

ARITHMETICALLY, the calculations are similar to those for the Alternative Vote, where the least popular candidates are eliminated and the supporters' second (and, if necessary, subsequent) preferences are distributed until one candidate reaches an absolute majority. The figures above are adapted from calculations I reported in this column on 17 February.

But politically, there is a big difference between AV and a pact. Under AV, all voters can demonstrate which party they support; with a pact, their choice is limited. Under AV, voters choose which anti-Tory candidate is the effective challenger; with a pact, that decision is imposed by the parties. And it is where arithmetic and politics collide that the idea of a pact starts to look less appealing.

As we have seen, on any reasonable assumption, a pact would not have denied Mrs Thatcher her victory last year. But it would have ensured a sharply reduced majority. Assuming some swing away from the government before the next election, the arithmetic drives remorselessly to the conclusion that the Tories would lose their majority. But even I have to admit that there is more to politics than electoral arithmetic.

The first difficulty would be to reconcile local Labour parties to the idea that they should devote effort to electing some Social Democrat who had left the Labour Party some years earlier. I should be amazed if there were a single constituency party willing to contemplate such a move. Should, say, 50 parties be required by some national decision to stand their candidate down, Neil Kinnock would almost certainly have at least 49 blistering rows to deal with. After all, look how fraught many of the negotiations were between the Liberals and SDP over the allocation of seats — when the parties nationally proclaimed mad passionate love for each other. Anyone who imagines Neil Kinnock and David Owen enjoying the same relationship as Roy Jenkins and David Steel does not live in a political world I recognise.

The second, even greater, difficulty would be to persuade voters that a pact is anything other than a cynical device to oppose the Conservatives. If each party continued to hold to its own manifesto, then the only unifying aim would be to defeat Thatcher. The opportunities for the Tories and for mischief would be enormous. 'Dr Owen, why are you asking your supporters to vote for Fred Bloggs, the Labour candidate for Mucktown, when Mr Bloggs says that he wants to send back all cruise missiles to America?' 'Mr Kinnock, the SDP candidate for West Wessex, Bartholomew Pratt, wants to stop unions giving money to the Labour Party. Why should your supporters vote for him?'

More serious questions would arise over the consequences of a pact should it succeed in depriving the Conservatives of their majority. Would there be a Labour-Alliance coalition? Or a short period of minority Labour rule followed by another pact-free general election? Either way, what policies would the incoming government pursue on the economy, the unions, Europe or defence? Although, as Professor Crewe has pointed out, the *arithmetic* of the pact makes little difference to Labour's chances of winning outright, the *politics* of a pact would force Labour — and the Liberals and the SDP — to contemplate some form of common programme. The time may come when such thoughts enter the political agenda: but not, I fancy, during the present decade.

One final historial footnote. Pacts, as it happens, have happened before. The last occasion was in Bolton and Huddersfield during the 1950s. Each town had two seats, and by way of an anti-Labour pact there was no Liberal candidate in Bolton East or Huddersfield East, and no Tory in Bolton West or Huddersfield West. The outcome? Two Liberal MPs, plus a Labour MP in Huddersfield East from 1951 to 1964, and a Tory in Bolton East.

In 1964 the pact broke down, all three parties contested all four seats, and Labour won each of them. Looking at the figures it is arguable whether Labour would have won Bolton East at any election between 1951 and 1959 — but probable that the Liberals would not have won either of their two seats without the pact. In other words, while the pact achieved its specific aim of hurting Labour, the only clear beneficiaries were the Liberals. When Alliance supporters today raise the idea of an anti-Tory pact, it is unlikely that they have Labour's best interests at heart. □

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Living beyond the lens

The number of the poor increases daily. Yet poverty has not been a primary concern of politics and it has all but disappeared from television. Peter Golding asks who is it that has failed

POVERTY IS firmly back on the political agenda. A clear signal that something is up came last week from Mrs Thatcher, reassuring the NSPCC's one hundredth annual meeting that 'Of course poverty matters', but (naturally there was a but), 'when it comes to the welfare of children it is the family, and the relations within the family, that count the most'. Yet, for all the familiar pious rhetoric, the word had passed her lips.

The back pages of the respectable weeklies are filled with reviews of voyeuristic ventures into the new wastelands of the recession. One of the best, Beatrix Campbell's feminist stalk of the ghost of Orwell (*Wigan Pier Revisited*, pub. Virago), has even made it into the best-seller lists. In the Welsh valleys the miners' strike has occasioned the return of soup kitchens for the first time in half a century (strikers' families are fined £15 a week, after all, by Social Security).

In his controversial Richard Dimbleby Lecture at the Royal Society of Arts, the Bishop of Liverpool, David Sheppard, affronted what he terms Comfortable Britain with a vision of 'a poverty which imprisons the spirit' behind the locked doors of dank housing, unemployment, and low incomes. Not for the first time he was castigated by Christian industrialist Sir Frederick Catherwood, a stern believer in the work ethic, who reminded the Bishop that 'unemployment would have fallen faster if so many had not become so grasping . . . The Protestant work ethic was based not just on hard work, but on restraints on consumption'. Sir Fred should be much cheered; restraints are back with a vengeance.

All the fuss is hardly surprising. Though the government continues to restrict publication of many of the pertinent statistics, there are now over seven million people clinging to the frayed safety net of Supplementary Benefit, the sorely over-stretched successor to National Assistance. By 1981, the most recently available figures show that roughly 15 million people, more than a quarter of the population, were living on low incomes (that is up to 40 per cent over Supplementary Benefit level). More than a quarter of all children, 3.7 million in all, were living on low incomes, including 1.7 million on or below Supplementary Benefit (SB) levels. The number of people living at this level increased by a quarter between 1979 and 1981, and over a million have been added to the SB payroll since then*. Yet as publicity budgets for benefits are slashed it is revealed that £760 million of SB went unclaimed in 1981 by people too perplexed, wearied or fearful to push their way through the labyrinth of the income maintenance system.

Poverty has a younger face now. Between 1979 and 1981 the numbers below pension age in poverty increased by 68 per cent, the numbers of children in poverty by 90 per cent. Over half a million one-parent families, six in ten of all such households, are on low incomes as defined above. By the start of this year well over a third of the unemployed had been so for over a year, so that they too are dependent on Supplementary Benefit as are, for at least part of their income, roughly two thirds of all the unemployed.

As the welfare safety net sags, so too it drags down the insecure haven at the base of the labour market. The largest category of people on or below the poverty line comprises people *at work*. In 1981 over half the children below the poverty line were in families containing someone at work. In 1983 almost three and a half million full-time workers, two thirds of them women, earned less than £100 a week. For a couple with two children, this yields a net income lower than they would receive on SB. Even in 1981 a family with two children spent, on average, £147 a week.

AS THE numbers in poverty increase so the gap between them and the bewildered or contemptuous contented majority widens. Next month Mr Fowler will dutifully announce the November upratings in benefits, including Child Benefit which up until now has been announced in the budget. While the rich are purring contentedly over the budget's abolition of investment income surcharge, the halving of stamp duty, and cuts in capital transfer tax, the poor can be forgiven for looking quizzically at the five pence or so in the pound likely to come their way.

But this is only the latest in a series of cuts in social security (others include changing the criteria for uprating pensions and ending earnings-related supplements to national insurance benefits) which have hugely reduced benefits expenditure since 1979. Now those on benefit receive £5 billion less than they would have before the benefit cuts, while the tax cuts for the better off tot up to a handsome £13 billion over the same period. In the bewildering megafinance of such political arithmetic it is sometimes possible to forget the pathetic penny packets that emerge at the other end of the machine. Supplementary Benefit for a couple is just £43.50 a week plus housing costs. Unemployment benefit is £27.05 for a single person, £43.75 for a couple (plus 15p per child!) Easy to see how, on his own £440 a week, the Chancellor might overlook the small change dispensed at the foot of the table.

IN THE midst of this catastrophe it has become an axiom of both Left and Right that the welfare state has failed. Social security costs over £35 billion a year, nearly 30 per cent of public expenditure, yet millions lead cruelly impover

John Sturrock/Report

Modern poverty in Britain: hidden from view and denied a potent image

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ished lives on incomes which barely permit the luxuries of dignity and hope. As the obituarists of Butskellite social democracy assess its modest successes, the poor inherit its failures.

The government's latest hastily constructed response has been to set up a series of reviews of the social security system. Announcing the reviews in the Commons last month the Secretary of State for Social Services, Norman Fowler, boldly claimed they 'constitute the most substantial examination of the social security system since the Beveridge report 40 years ago'. Cynics have been, understandably, less impressed. The review teams are working to an impossibly short time scale, with reports due this year in preparation for legislation, if required, in 1985.

The Tory press was certainly not fooled by Mr Fowler's hyperbole. 'Crackdown On Welfare Waste' was the *Daily Mail*'s no-nonsense front page headline. 'The aim', explained political editor Gordon Greig, 'is to halt or cut the cost of State services'. As if to remind us that the reviews are needed *Mail* readers were treated to exposés of 'A Grand Life On The Dole' on the inside pages. *The Sun* was equally clear what the reviews are about. In its story, headlined 'Maggie Shake-Up on Dole Hand Outs', the paper reported 'Premier Margaret Thatcher has ordered a massive shake-up of Britain's social security system in a bid to save millions of pounds a year'. Wishful thinking or privileged knowledge?

Pressed in the House Mr Fowler reiterated the cautionary refrain, 'We are working on the premise of operating within the existing overall budget. We must recognise that there are resource constraints'. More recent hints confirm not only the nil-costs basis of the reviews, but the continuing pressure to channel any 'savings' into tax cuts rather than redistribute them within the social security budget, itself a less than desirable outcome given the exclusion of tax expenditures (exemptions) from the reviews.

There are four reviews together with a survey of the disabled. The pensions review was already under way, an actuarial nightmare created by the unfortunate insistence of the elderly on living longer. The second review looks at the monumental cock-up which is the housing benefit scheme, a source of confusion and uncertain income for a third of the households in the country. That review is chaired by Jeremy Rowe, deputy chairman of the Abbey National (and, until recently, chairman of the London Brick Company).

The Supplementary Benefits scheme, the bloated and anfractuous legacy of a quarter of a century's accumulated inadequacies in the contributory benefit scheme, is the subject of a third review, under Tony Newton. The scheme was reviewed under the last Labour government in a departmental report called *Social Assistance* (1978) that paved the way for the two 1980 Social Security Acts (whose injurious impact on claimants is meticulously documented in a recent book by Janet Allbeson and Roger Smith, *We Don't Give Clothing Grants Any More*, CPAG, £2.50.) With an annual expenditure of £5½ billion, 35,000 staff are needed to administer SB. In fact the ratio of staff to claimaints dropped by a third between 1979 and 1983, but that vast army of civil servants must be a tempting target for the

A radical programme against poverty

AFTER FORTY years the Welfare State is certainly in need of an overhaul. But what form should it take?

Secretary of State Norman Fowler's mind is clear with his current five reviews of social security policy. The most important of these — on pensions — will chop back Labour's 1975 earnings-related pension scheme. This, by the time it comes to full maturity in 1998, would put all pensioners automatically above the State poverty line.

The review will probably introduce personal 'portable' pension entitlement. The effect of these will be severely to erode the schemes on which 12 million occupational pensioners now rely, which base pension rights on 'final salaries'. Similarly the housing benefit review will almost certainly extend further the present £190 million of cuts in payments.

The review of the social security of children and young persons is likely to recommend that the payment of benefits should be means-tested and that there should be large cuts or even outright abolition of benefits. (The additions for dependant children attached to unemployment and sickness benefit are already being abolished in the current Health and Social Security Bill.) The aim is to force young persons off the dole and into low paid jobs which they would not otherwise entertain — the government's abolition of the Fair Wages Resolution last September was part of the same strategy. On the same basis the review of supplementary benefits will probably recommend abolishing most extra entitlements that top up the minimum rates.

Only the disabled are likely to see any improvement from the Fowler reviews. It is widely recognised here that the present medley of benefits urgently needs to be systematised. A new, wider-ranging disability benefit will probably be recommended — to be paid for by cuts in benefits affecting other groups.

If these turn out to be the conclusions of the Fowler review, there are four fundamental objections. The central one is that there are 9 million people in Britain today living on supplementary benefit and in poverty (i.e 7½ million in the families of claimants and 1½-2 million entitled to claim, but not doing so, according to government figures). They cannot be taken out of poverty without expending more money, yet Mr Fowler's reviews are circumscribed by 'existing overall budgets'.

Second, the basic problem is not of an over-complex system that needs 'simplifying', but of a system that pays insurance benefits which are so appallingly low that millions of retired, widowed, sick and unemployed persons fall through the safety net and end up on the mountain of means-tested benefit claimants — a mountain now grossly swollen by mass unemployment.

Third, Mr Fowler's predilection for concentrating on 'deserving' hardship cases and those on the lowest incomes is a euphemism for a further extension of means-testing, which is not only degrading but inefficient. Means testing normally reduces the 'take-up' of a benefit to 40-50 per cent of those entitled.

Fourth, the whole Tory strategy of claiming that the Welfare State is no longer viable and needs 'restructing' is camouflage for the real process of redistribution of wealth from poor to rich now taking place on an unprecedented scale. As the conventional open-to-all Welfare State is squeezed, other, private welfare states — taking advantage of regressive tax reliefs now costing the Exchequer £9,000 million this year and based on 'occupational welfare' and 'fringe benefits' — have burgeoned.

If for these reasons the Tory offensive is wrong-headed, what *should* be done? It is true that the post-war Beveridge framework needs an overhaul, but for quite different reasons. It has broken down partly because its 'interface' with the tax system keeps intensifying the poverty trap; partly because new problems have grown in the 1960s to 1970s (notably concerning one-parent families and the disabled) which Beveridge couldn't have foreseen; and partly because this array of contributory benefits was originally pitched at a level below the national assistance poverty line and has remained there.

GIVEN THIS analysis, a genuine re-evaluation of the Welfare State might proceed from the following premises:

- all contributory benefits should be paid at the level of, or slightly above, the supplementary benefit line for an average family with two children
- concentrating open-to-all welfare payments on those in the greatest need should be achieved, not by 'dirty' and degrading means test, but via a revamped multi-tier income tax structure
- the poverty trap should be overcome principally by substantial increase in child benefit, accompanied by phasing out the Family Income Supplement, but also by amalgamating national insurance contributions within the income tax structure; and reducing the tax disincentive to the low-paid by introducing a lower-rate tax band
- tax reliefs should be systematically reduced by abolishing the higher rate reliefs
- housing aid should be reallocated according the need, irrespective of type of tenure, by amalgamating mortgage interest tax relief with current housing benefit funds
- a comprehensive disability benefit should be introduced.

Systematic quantification of this kind of genuine development of the original Beveridge model was undertaken last year by a sub-committee of the Treasury Select Committee. It demonstrated that *on a strict 'revenue neutral' basis* (i.e. no extra 'tax take' by the revenue) it was possible to more than triple child benefit, from £5.85 a week per child as it then was, to £20 a week) and then to ensure this very large increase was concentrated without means tests on the poorest families through a radically new multi-tier income tax structure.

At present, income tax — so far from being progressive — is virtually flat-rate; 19 out of 20 taxpayers only pay income tax at the standard rate of 30 per cent. If this inequitable and virtually flat-rate poll tax were replaced by a 4-tier structure, with rates at 15 per cent, 30 per cent, 45 per cent and 60 per cent, a smooth, automatic and efficient means of channelling aid to those in greatest need would be achieved.

Furthermore, this package of measures would secure the virtual ending of supplementary benefit and with it poverty in this country as conventionally defined. It also offers an altogether simpler as well as much fairer system. And for those for whom the question of funding might present an impasse, it must be stressed that not only are these proposals self-financing via redistribution, but that the cumulative value of the tax handouts to the 5 per cent richest in the population since 1979 now totals £12,900 million. A reversal of these pickings must clearly be part of a new radical Welfare State programme.

Michael Meacher MP

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Treasury Generalissimos whose dank spirit can be detected behind the whole review exercise.

The final review is looking at benefits for children and young people, chaired by Dr Rhodes Boyson, the Social Security Minister — which is rather like appointing King Herod as nursery play-leader. The good doctor has spent much energy recently plugging minor loopholes in the social security regulations, like a veritable Horatio holding the bridge against the welfare rights legions. Boyson has rapidly reversed decisions to pay for medical aids for the sick and disabled, to pay the unemployed if they had been getting holiday pay or pay in lieu, to pay students SB under certain conditions, and to pay grants to the single homeless for cookers and beds. His latest triumph is to enforce the deduction of the value of gifts of firewood and food parcels from claimants' benefits, a heroic blow in the class war.

BOYSON, of course, has long been a leading prophet of the new welfare realism. In writings that sounded loony till people voted for them and the Think Tank and Family Policy Group refurbished them, the former Labour councillor has repeatedly insisted that, as he wrote in 1971, 'A state which does for its citizens what they can do for themselves is an evil state'. With visionary precision he went on, 'where poverty remains it is the fault of politicians whose double sin has been to spread benefits too widely and raise taxes on a scale that hinders the increase in national income'.

A few years later (in *Centre Forward*, 1978) he was extolling the Victorian virtues and discretion of Lady Bountiful, who could prevent 'idleness and scroungers exploiting the more honest and hard working. This saps the moral fabric of our society . . .' In sum, as Dr Boyson elegantly concluded, 'The welfare state has really become a treacle well and not a lifebelt'.

These admirable maxims will be fundamental to the reviews, whose reports and recommendations will not be published until carefully vetted by a civil service team under Mr Fowler. While welfare experts will attempt some blindfold raiding parties on the weaker flanks of administrative mischief, the key battles will be on hidden ground.

How has it been possible to arrive at this disaster? The labour movement must bear at least part of the responsibility. To take just the recent activity of the Labour Party, despite the important efforts of Michael Meacher, how often has the social security portfolio fallen to a junior spokesperson, even, for a period, outside the Cabinet? The Party's last serious published statement in the field was a discussion document published three years ago, which, in spite of a declamatory conclusion that 'there is no area of policy more central to the achievement of socialism . . . than social security', in fact lamely and and candidly confesses it was too soon and too difficult to propose a comprehensive programme of policies. The 1983 Manifesto managed only a couple of pages on social security out of 40, and vaguely promised a 'thorough review'. Two years ago a working group to examine redistribution through tax and social security was set up. It never met and then disappeared when the whole panoply of committees was restructured in the new regime. Now a joint NEC-Shadow Cabinet committee on taxation and social policy has been created, but it has not met nor clarified its terms of reference.

For the unions, lingering commitments to the contributory principle, to the notion of the family wage, and the sheer enervation of the last few years provide a less than sturdy framework to support a visionary confrontation with mass poverty.

Yet behind all that, behind all our understanding of the structural imperatives of a retooled capitalism, of the quiet death of the social democratic project, lies a failure of compassion which has left us no means of comprehending poverty in the 1980s. As our main source of common experience, television must bear some responsibility for this in its abandonment of social realism. Since the heroic days of 'Cathy Come Home', what has happened to the one medium able to translate the grand scale of isolated privations into the public drama of common experience? Where are the dramatic explorations of the growing schism between comfortable and poor in contemporary Britain? Of course there are honourable exceptions: Bleasdale's *Boys from the Blackstuff*, Loach and Garnett's *Spongers*, to name two deservedly fêted recent examples.

But television drama has become all upstairs and no downstairs, a wholesale abandonment of any attempt to engage with the social calamity of Thatcher's Britain. Retreat into the private angst of the urban intellectual and the more exotic hinterland of personal relationships has left the television play, like the much heralded rebirth of British film production, stranded far afield from the experiences and anxieties of a quarter of the population.

In its reworking of history, television drama series feed voraciously off every minor rediscovered Edwardian novelist when not celebrating yet another Churchill or transatlantic aristocrat. Is there really so little drama to be discovered in the hunger marches, the means test, or even the writings of Arthur Monson, Jack London, Mrs Pember Reeves? What more poignant and televisual drama could inform our understanding of the travails of the GLC, not to mention the DHSS, than an intelligent protrayal of 'Poplarism'? Yet instead, imperial nostalgia is al the Raj.

The cruel taunt that poverty is simply not the stuff of drama is, in its way, true enough. Lacking the visual appeal of Dickensian squalor or the haunting and pathetic piteousness of the shoeless snotty-nosed urchins of *Picture Post* iconography, the unapologetic poor of 1980s Britain live beyond the lens. Less a series of epic disasters than a chronic and continuous struggle, a cold and degrading uphill trudge against the wind of recession, modern poverty is hidden from public view, denied a potent or meaningful imagery.

Yet there is drama in the battle to retrieve a lost giro, the candlelit despair of disconnection, the corrosive anger generated within families overcrowded in crumbling, damp, inadequate housing, relationships stretched beyond loving tolerance by the enforced imprisoning domesticity of unemployment and empty pockets. Fielding was over two centuries too soon when he wrote 'The sufferings of the poor are, indeed, less observed than their misdeeds . . . They starve and freeze and rot among themselves, but they beg and steal and rob among their betters'. Was Fielding's patrician pity any worse than the contemporary sin of lack of interest?

Ever since the more gruesome efforts of Elizabethan penal policy to brand, whip, herd and pillory the poor, the British have only loosely distinguished poverty from crime. Despite a certain sea-change in attitudes to the unemployed (we do now let them in cheap at football matches and swimming baths) even now nearly as many people see 'the need to encourage people to work harder' as 'getting rid of poverty' as among the most serious of current problems, according to a Harris poll reported in the *Observer* last month.

Without a major effort to rewrite the history of poverty and to recreate its dramatic presence in all our lives, its reappearence on the political agenda will be in the terms so cogently outlined by Dr Boyson The elimination of poverty will be determined crucially by the form of its rediscovery.

*These statistics are taken from the Child Poverty Action Group's lucid new fact sheet *Poverty What Poverty?*, available from CPAG, 1 Macklin St, London WC2B 5NH.

Peter Golding is Research Fellow at Leicester University Centre for Mass Communication Research. His last book, co-authored with Sue Middleton, was Images of Welfare *published by Martin Robertson.*

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☐'The book reviews are so good and informative, you feel you don't have to read the books.' — From advertisement for *The Listener* in *Radio Times* (Nina Hibbin)

☐Mr Ian Beer, headmaster of Harrow School, let slip a little bit of advice which might be of use to parents agonising over the choice of public schools when he addressed the Council for Independent Education yesterday. It is simply this: go and watch a rugger match play and count the number of 'coloured people' in the team. The more 'coloured people' the greater the difficulty the school is having in recruiting. — *Guardian* (T. Mantripp)

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MINERS' STRIKE

Seams of resentment

Attempts to enforce solidarity from Ravenscraig steel workers led to bitter union divisions in Scotland. Alf Young reports

ONE MAN was missing from the Edinburgh meeting which finally patched together a deal on coal supplies to the Ravenscraig steelworks in Scotland for the duration of the miners' strike — George Bolton, Vice-President of the Scottish NUM and chairman of the British Communist Party. This was just as well, since Bolton was instrumental in placing the Lanarkshire plant in the firing line in the first place, a tactic which unleashed the worst bout of inter-union fratricide seen in Scotland for decades.

From the moment Bolton announced the dispatch of NUM pickets to Ravenscraig (27 March) until the face-saving compromise emerged (11 May), Scottish steelworkers and miners were at each others' throats. TGWU haulage drivers openly flouted their union's instructions and drove convoys of coal through official picket lines, defiantly flashing union cards from their cabs. And a boycotted bulk carrier was berthed at Hunterston, Ravenscraig's coal and ore terminal 50 miles away on the Ayrshire coast, without tugboat workers and discharged without dockers.

In some of the worst scenes in the strike so far, mounted police charged into crowds of pickets at Hunterston's gates. As they did so, trade union solidarity was also being trampled underfoot and the much-vaunted Triple Alliance (Scottish section) was in danger of being buried for ever.

The conflict gave the right-wing press a field-day. And the police, in an operation which cost close to £1 million in overtime alone, developed new ways of thwarting NUM pickets. The battle of Ravenscraig was a strategic disaster for the miners and for the wider Labour movement, a tragedy all the more poignant because it could have been avoided.

THE 'CRAIG has a special significance in Scotland's recent political history. One of British Steel's big five integrated works, Ravenscraig was, in 1982, chosen for the axe by then-chairman Ian MacGregor. But a spirited defence mounted by the Scottish TUC, supported by the churches, local authorities and all the political parties (the Tory party's Scottish Chairman spoke in support at an STUC sponsored conference) scored its biggest victory since the UCS struggle on the Upper Clyde in 1971.

Only the CBI failed to join in. Scottish secretary George Younger let it be known he would resign if MacGregor got his way. In the end the cabinet decreed all five major BSC plants would go on making steel for three years.

But now the clouds are again gathering on Ravenscraig's horizon. The European Commission is insisting that steel industries in member states be free of government subsidies by the end of 1985. In its revised corporate plan British Steel is again telling Whitehall it can only achieve that if one of its three strip steel producers — Llanwern and Port Talbot in South Wales and Ravenscraig — is shut. The Scottish plant is again prime candidate for closure.

It is because the Lanarkshire steel workforce still faced a precarious future that any attempt to embroil them in the miners' dispute was bound to meet with resistance. They have an especial commitment to the steel plant because they have worked tirelessly to beat productivity records and win new customers in a bid to survive.

Knowing this and recognising Ravenscraig's plight, senior Scottish trades unionists negotiated behind the scenes to prevent the 'Craig being dragged to centre stage in the battle over pit closures. But they reckoned without the hardliners in the NUM's Scottish leadership, for whom solidarity with miners is the overriding political imperative.

In normal times Ravenscraig satisfies a third of its coal needs by taking the entire output of Scotland's last coking coal pit, Polkemmet in West Lothian, which employs 1,400 men. The rest is imported, through the Hunterston coastal terminal, mainly from Australia and the US.

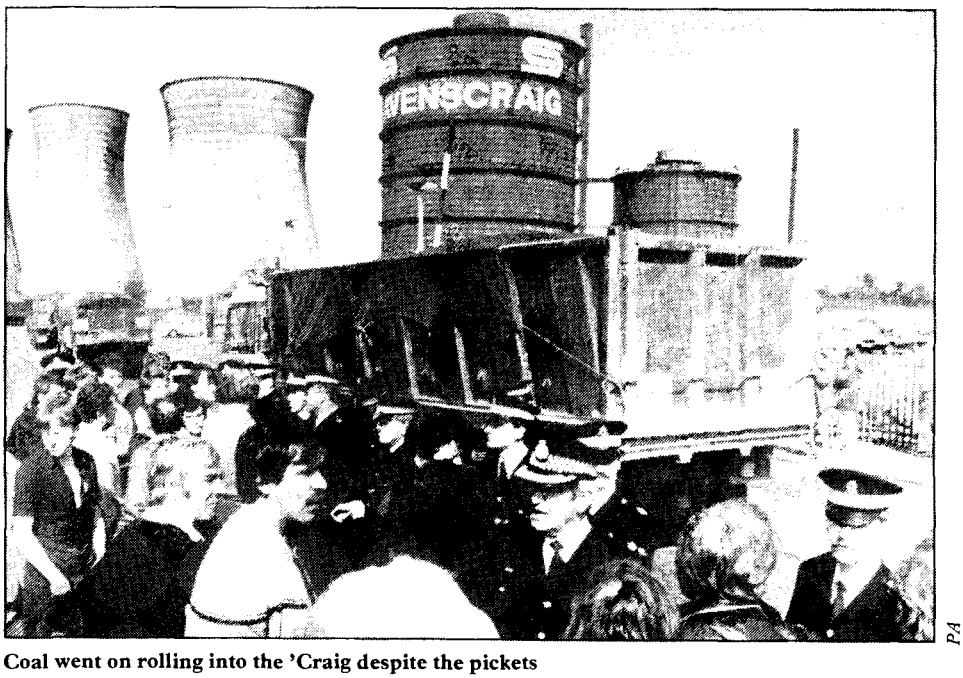
Increasingly Hunterston has been used as a trans-shipment port for foreign coal, some of it destined for the Irish market in direct competition with tonnage produced in Scotland. This has angered Bolton, who is in favour of a ban on all coal imports. He also resented the half-hearted gestures of support given by the steelworkers at the outset of the miners' strike. Steel workers laid off by lack of coal supplies should join us on the picket lines at their own gates, was his challenge to them.

BUT THESE things only partially explain his urge to make Ravenscraig a central target of the current dispute. With support from miners south of the border still patchy and talk of a right-wing rebellion in the NUM's National Executive, Bolton argued it was necessary to make the strike bite quickly in Scotland.

Colleagues in the Triple Alliance and the General Council of the STUC were taken aback when he outlined his strategy. Bolton argued that if they prevented Ravenscraig from making any steel, pressure would immediately be put on Younger. The Scottish Secretary would be forced to act as determinedly as he did in 1982 to save the steelworks, this time persuading Thatcher to produce a negotiating position that would ensure an early miners' victory.

But there was then a mass popular campaign to save a plant from the autocratic axe of MacGregor. And, symbolically, the government could afford to concede to the campaigners' wishes. This time, the threat was from miners to whom the government cannot be seen to concede anything. When Bolton deployed his case, incredulous steel union officials pointed out that running down steel production ran the risk that refractory linings in coke ovens and blast furnaces would cave in, leaving repair bills mounting to tens of millions of pounds — the perfect excuse for the government to wash its hands of Ravenscraig.

Nor was Bolton's analysis apparently shared by Mick McGahey, Arthur Scargill's deputy, who is also Scottish NUM president and a previous chairman of the Communist Party. At a Triple Alliance meeting on 6 April, McGahey agreed that enough supplies of coal should be supplied to Ravenscraig to keep the plant going at some two thirds of capacity. He insisted, however, that he couldn't live with the precise level of supplies being made public. ▶



PA

Coal went on rolling into the 'Craig despite the pickets

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But the agreement — two trainloads a day — was leaked and, within 24 hours, McGahey too was publicly insisting that steel production at Ravenscraig must cease. Despite that, Ravenscraig continued to receive its two trainloads a day. There was just one hiccup, when British Steel tried to land a cargo of coal at Hunterston using a Liberian registered vessel. That crisis was averted, but the steelworkers went on record as being willing to use coal however it arrived at their plant.

Then, on 26 April, the Coal Board in Scotland issued a provocative statement pointing out to Polkemmet's 1,400 striking miners that Ravenscraig was surviving very happily without them. The Polkemmet men had originally voted by 70 per cent *against* strike action and the NCB exploited that perceived lack of resolution by suggesting that their output might be displaced by imported coking coal when the dispute ends.

Hillside Crescent, the NUM's Edinburgh Headquarters was besieged by calls from angry Polkemmet miners; now the Ravenscraig agreement was jeopardising their jobs. When the Triple Alliance met next day McGahey had to go down the Bolton road — coal supplies were cut to one trainload a day.

An appeal from the Ravenscraig unions was heard by the miners in McGahey's absence. Bolton was unyielding. When the steelworkers argued that they were being singled out for tough treatment while Llanwern and Port Talbot in South Wales were being spared, Bolton said the Welsh plants would be dealt with.

On 2 May, McGahey turned down a second appeal. The hardline faction had had its way. But within hours the Ravenscraig workers were proving that ISTC leader Bill Sirs had been right more than a month before when he warned his members were not prepared to be crucified on the altar of someone else's dispute. Steelworkers co-operated with management in running convoys of coal by road between Hunterston and Ravenscraig. There followed nine days of increasingly bitter clashes on the picket line. Police swamped the miners even when their numbers soared above 1,000.

But still the lorries rolled, their union drivers defying TGWU instructions to stop strike-breaking. A day of action called by the STUC in support of the miners suffered from the Ravenscraig crisis. The biggest march, in Glasgow, was only saved by strong contingents of teachers and local authority white collar workers. Eighty-seven per cent of railworkers, the third partner in the Triple Alliance, turned up for work that day.

The Ravenscraig debacle, with its insistence on absolute solidarity with miners, was tearing the heart out of actual, inter-union solidarity. When the Triple Alliance reconvened on 11 May, McGahey, in the absence of Bolton, agreed that Ravenscraig could get 18,000 tonnes of coal a week. No one wanted to talk about trainloads, but it was clear the steelworkers were getting what they'd asked for all along.

Despite one more hiccup over dockers at Hunterston, the deal is sticking. But unions will be paying the price of the Ravenscraig fiasco for years to come. □

Alf Young is a freelance industrial journalist.

Peace protests roll call (3)

Here are a list of some of the recent arrests at peace camps and bases. New information should be sent to Janey Hulme at the New Statesman. *The figure in bold represents the number of arrests and the figure in brackets the total to date at that place.*

Upper Heyford USAF base **2**(1,014)
2.5.84. 2 charged with Obstruction of Highway. Fined £25 each at Banbury Mag Court.

Molesworth/Alconbury **14**(65)
Lanky arrested for non-payment of outstanding fine and Phil for non-payment of fine, April '84. Terry & Sybilla arrested attempting to stop police taking Phil away. Complaint lodged as police entered caravan without a search warrant. 10 women arrested after climbing fence at Alconbury on 12 May. All released without charge. Two were strip searched by an American policewoman from the base. After complaining about this the remaining eight were strip searched by MOD police.

Capenhurst Uranium Enrichment Plant (32)
Crown court case dropped of the 19 women arrested 25 March '84. All now to appear at magistrates court. All refused to plead. Atomic Energy Authority Police bringing charges. Court date for further hearing within next 3/4 weeks.

Greenham Common (Arrests from April '84) **47** (Approx. fig to 31 Mar. '84 1,775)
20.4.84. 6 women arrested after entering the base near missile silos. The women conducted an Easter service throughout the arrest. All were strip searched. 5 released without charge and only one charged with cr. damage. Hearing 25 June.

23.4.84. 4 women arrested. Charged with cr. damage. Hearing 22 June.

7.5.84. 16 women arrested for painting perimeter fence and roads around base. All released on bail to appear in court 31 May. (A further 14 women were arrested by MOD police but released without charge).

12/13.5.84. 21 women arrested. All facing at least one charge of cr. damage. Most refused bail conditions that they did not go within 5 miles of Greenham Common and were remanded in custody until hearing 19/20 June.

Monika Timm was sentenced to 30 days and 28 days in prison to run consecutively. This was for four charges of Cr. Dam. arising from two separate incidents in Dec. '83. Evidence against her was minimal. Her conviction arose from admissions made whilst in custody at the end of 10 hours questioning after being awake for nearly 48 hours, coupled with the fact that she is German and her English at that time was rather poor. An appeal for a reduced sentence is planned.

**Women are still working on past figures for arrests at Greenham. These will be published when available.*

MEDICINE

Safety last

Jad Adams examins the poor record of the DHSS's drug watchdog

THE ANTI-ARTHRITIC drug phenylbutazone, known as bute, is the most dangerous medicine commonly prescribed. It has been on the market in Britain for over 30 years. For almost 20 of those years a drug monitoring committee has existed whose activities in checking this drug show barely a flicker of life.

Ignorance about the possible dangers of bute is so widespread that Prince Philip boasted of having used it to prolong his own polo playing career. (This was after trainers had been severely criticised for giving it to horses.) In 1980, doctors made out over 1,600,000 prescriptions for the drug in England and Wales. Most of them were for minor complaints — sprains and sports injuries like Prince Philip's.

Yet according to Martindale's *Pharmacopaeia*, 'side' effects occur in 24 to 45 per cent of patients taking the drug and, according to the figures from the DHSS Medicines Division, where under-reporting is endemic, the deaths of 576 people have been associated with the drug since records began. This is a higher figure than for any other drug.

The evidence against the drug has been piling up for a long time, augmented by leaked reports from Ciba-Geigy, its main producers. The only surprise in the Health Minister's decision last February to ban it in one form (oxyphenbutazone) and restrict it to hospital use only in another (phenylbutazone) is that it didn't happen 10 years ago. Pharmacists now have until 8 June to return stocks of the drugs.

The problem lies with the DHSS Medicines Division and in particular with its core body, the Committee of Safety of Medicines (CSM). As a quango, the CSM is unaccountable, secretive and enormously powerful. The CSM was set up in response to the thalidomide tragedy of the 1960s which damaged more than 430 babies in the UK. It was clear that powerful medicines would have to be licensed and once on the market would have to be monitored to check for rare or delayed adverse reactions. The first error of drug monitoring in the UK was that one committee had both these functions. A body which passes a medicine as having 'safety, quality and efficacy' cannot be expected to respond without prejudice when, a few months later, it is suggested it does not live up to those standards.

THE COMMITTEE (then called the Committee on Safety of Drugs) got off to a good start in 1964 under the charismatic chairmanship of Sir Derrick Dunlop, an

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Edinburgh professor whose open approach should have set the tone for the future. Unfortunately, since 1970 civil servants have been advising on the appointment of chairpersons of a more secretive frame of mind.

Because of the time it took to establish the framework of legislation, the CSD operated for the first few years in voluntary agreement with the pharmaceutical industry. Drug companies agreed to submit data on new products and abide by the committee's advice. Otherwise, the Minister of Health announced, 'he would publicise cases where the committee's advice was disregarded.' Although this sounds like a pantomime threat, in the sensitive but highly profitable drugs market adverse publicity is something the manufacturers fear more than anything else.

Phenylbutazone is a good example of the way in which an obsession with secrecy pervades every area of the CSM's life: I called the DHSS recently to ask when the CSM was due to discuss phenylbutazone. Not only could I not be told the date, but the facts I already knew could not be acknowledged. As the spokesperson said: The pharmaceutical industry lobbied for this sort of confidentiality when the Medicines Act was going through. As soon as something is up before the CSM it might be commercially prejudicial for it to be known. Section 118 of the Act was inserted in fairness to the confidential interests of the industry.

Under Section 118 of the Medicines Act 1968 if that civil servant had told me that the CSM was considering phenylbutazone he would have been liable to a £400 fine or two years' imprisonment, or both — hardly an inducement to freedom of information.

The secrecy covers every aspect of drug licensing and monitoring and thus seriously impedes the work of anyone interested in protecting the public from drugs with adverse reactions — doctors, scientists, journalists should be able to check the number of adverse reaction reports received with nothing more arduous than a telephone call as they can in America. The secretiveness of the CSM makes it extremely difficult — if not impossible — to obtain any information on reports of drug injury.

Mrs Jean Trainor set up the Eraldin Action Group to represent the thousands of people who believed they had been damaged by ICI's heart drug practolol in the 1970s. She said of the CSM: 'Not only did I have to try to get information of ICI, but worse still was trying to get information from the Committee of Safety of Medicines. It was a dual-headed monster. I needed to help people and I could have done more, but I just could not find out things I needed to know.'

The similarity of response between the industry and the CSM is far from coincidental. It full-time officers often come from or go on to the pharmaceutical industry. Its own members often have worked or still work for the industry. In 1981 researcher Joan Shenton asked if the business interests of CSM members and annual retainers from the pharmaceutical industry had to be declared. Two questions were returned unanswered, so she asked them again in 1983 in a filmed interview with the current Chairman of the CSM, Professor Abraham Goldberg. This time one of the four DHSS advisers who insisted on being present during the interview stopped him and told him six times not to answer. Finally we asked Michael Meacher, the opposition spokesman, to ask the questions of the minister in the House this year. The answer is that three out of 18 members of the CSM have declared payments from the industry (Goldberg volunteered that he had no business interests and he is the 19th member).

A more murky and as yet unexplored area is that of the control the drug industry exerts over academic research by selectively funding projects. Fourteen of the 19 CSM members are in academic positions. It is near impossible to find out where medical research projects get their money.

How members are appointed is a matter of some speculation. Ostensibly the 'great and the good' from the world of medicine and pharmacy are invited by the Chairman to join. In fact, the staff of DHSS Medicines Division play a leading part in everyone's appointment, including that of the chairperson.

The honour of membership of the CSM is used as all honours are — partly as a way of rewarding the good with greatness, partly as a way of muzzling them. There are forthright members of the CSM who could and would make a lot of information public were they not bound to secrecy by CSM membership.

The CSM labours under another great difficulty: its powers under the Medicines Act are great but clumsy. The CSM can suspend a drug's license or withdraw it from general use — but it cannot do anything less drastic, which obviously discourages it from acting at all in many cases. Even if the CSM does ban a drug, the drug company can appeal — and while the appeal is pending, the drug can be sold and prescribed.

Ultimately it's the minister who is the licensing authority. But he always follows the Committee's advice unless Medicines Division officials go to him behind the Committee's back and give him contrary advice — as they did over Depo-Provero. No minister with nil background in medicine, like Kenneth Clarke — a practising barrister — would start debating points of pharmacology with world experts.

But the problem does not begin and end with the CSM. GPs will prescribe phenylbutazone because it was the drug of choice when they were at medical school 25 years ago or, conversely, give every patient Opren because it is advertised all over the medical journals and they want to 'give it a whirl'. And the baseline is the huge profit to be made on drugs which means that more value is placed on sales returns than on safety. So as yet, there is no discussion between these three — the CSM, GPs and the drug industry — to initiate responsible control of drugs. □

Jad Adams is Associate Producer with Meditel Productions Ltd whose series on drug injury Kill or Cure? *is now being repeated on Channel 4.*

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RACISM

Educating Patrick

Amrit Wilson looks at London's anti-racist guidelines

RIGHT in the middle of the GLC's anti-racist year, amid all the rallying round to save inner London's education authority, something embarrassing has happened. While they churn out anti-racist advisory documents and publicity material, events within London educational institutions have seriously called into question their ability to deal with racism as it is actually experienced. The month-long dispute at the North London Polytechnic is only the most dramatic of the events.

Other cases however can be more revealing, as for example that of 11-year-old Shaun Robertson, a student at Chingford School within the GLC but under the Walthamstow education authority. In June last year a police detective visited the school, said he was investigating a burglary in the area and asked for the names and addresses of all the black children. The staff provided them. He then mentioned that one of the alleged robbers had had two teeth struck out; a teacher told him that Shaun Robertson had had orthodontic treatment that morning. Soon after Shaun was arrested by plainclothes police officers and taken to Chingford police station where he was questioned without his parents being present (i.e. in contravention of the Judges' Rules).

His mother who had learnt through Shaun's schoolfriend that her son had been dragged off by two white men rang the police station. It was only after three telephone calls from her that the Chingford police told her that they were in fact holding Shaun. He was eventually released without being charged.

Had the school been applying the ILEA guidelines, they would have acted in the same way. In a circular (82/139) sent out to all head-teachers, including the heads of infant schools, ILEA instructed them to 'provide the police with any factual information required on pupils under police investigation from school records or from personal knowledge of the pupil concerned.'

This touches on the heart of the dilemma about 'community policing' and 'multi-agency policing'. From the more liberal police and the seminal Bramshill conference in September 1982 for all state agencies has come the reasonable argument that crime is a problem for the whole of society and all persons and agencies should accept some responsibility for preventing or controlling it. But there is a profound difference between an agency — like a school — acting in such a way that its pupils are less likely to commit crimes and those bodies becoming in effect unpaid agents of the police, especially of a police force which was robustly criticised in the most authoritative study yet of the Met (the report by the Policy Study Institute) for inordinately racist and macho behaviour. If the repressive parts of the State are becoming qualitatively more racist, how can the welfare agencies co-operate with them without being co-opted into the process of racist policing too?

Where does this leave ILEA's anti-racist policy? Its ambiguity is illustrated most strikingly by the events at PNL. ILEA's stand (which they have maintained rather precariously because of internal differences) is that Patrick Harrington cannot be banned from the polytechnic because the anti-racist policies are applicable only within educational institutions; there is no evidence that Harrington has behaved in a racist way within PNL. From ILEA's point of view it is irrelevant that Harrington is assistant editor of *National Front News* and is one of the National Front's two student organisers who were recently praised by the Front for their commitment.

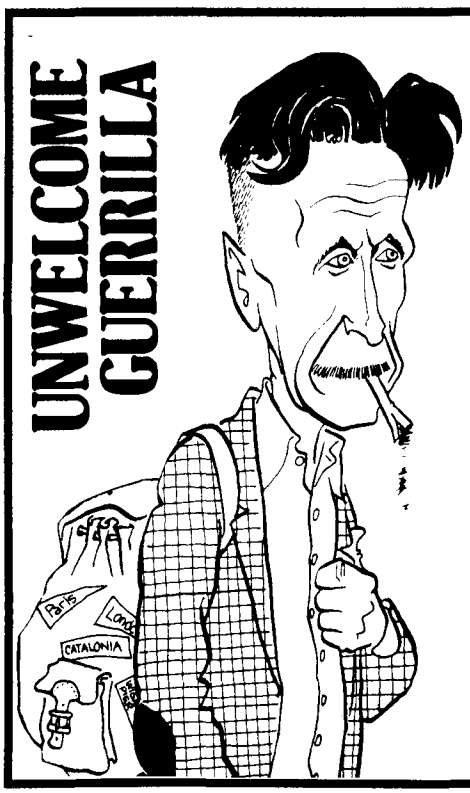
According to members of staff at PNL (not all of them left-wing) ILEA's approach has actually made it easier for the National Front to turn a political issue into a legal battle. This is in line with what is now the NF's year-old strategy of making political capital out of the Left's concern for civil liberties, and lends credence to the view that the NF chose PNL because of its (now outdated) reputation as a 'Marxist' college.

'ILEA', one lecturer commented, 'is seeing the dispute in the National Front's terms as a civil rights issue — Harrington's right to education, ignoring black people's right to personal security. They seem to think that he can be regarded as a different person within the poly, but of course he carries with him his prominence in the National Front, an organisation which although it is legal has a long history of violence against black people. Black students, Jewish students and many women students feel intimidated by his very presence.' The right to receive an education from the State is not the same as the right to demand other students' share in the process of educating someone who is an active member of an organisation whose *raison d'etre* is to enforce the superiority of the white British male.

In fact, ILEA does have certain courses of action open to it. According to Bob Crossman, chair of the advisory Multi-Ethnic Committee of ILEA who is critical of official ILEA policy: 'Taking action is not difficult. Harrington can and should be offered private tuition, it has been done in other instances. And the offer should not be negotiable. If he refuses, the polytechnic and ILEA will have no further obligations towards him'.

Neil Fletcher, the chair of ILEA's Further and Higher Education Committee, says that the anti-racist guidelines may now be re-examined and amended. But can they be made effective by mere amendment? According to Raj Ray, secretary of the National Convention of Black Teachers, the anti-racist policies were formulated for 'political expediency not action'. They offer no power to deal with actual racist situations in schools or colleges, nor do they go much beyond individual attitudes in their analysis. ILEA has five pamphlets on Race, Sex and Class of which the anti-racism statement and guidelines constitute the fourth. Britain is presented essentially as a pluralistic society where different groups compete on equal terms hampered not so much by repressive laws and structures but by individual racist and sexist attitudes.

'All employees of ILEA and users of the authority's services', the guidelines proclaim, 'are uniquely placed if only they would seize the opportunity to educate generations of young people free of racism and prejudice'. There is no mention of the police, though increasingly young black people feel they live in a police state, and a hopeful reliance on multi-ethnic education — something which the black community is increasingly coming to suspect as both ineffectual and divisive of black people. □



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FAMILIES

Mother country

For Tories, the family is paramount — if you are white. But, as Dr Sanjoy Roy-Chowdhury has found, if you are not, even professional privileges cannot get over immigration barriers

IN JUNE 1982 we were expecting a visit from my widowed septuagenarian mother. A few days before she was due to arrive I got a message that she was having some difficulty in getting an entry certificate from the British Deputy High Commission at my home town in India, despite my notarised declaration sponsoring her visit accompanying the application.

I promptly got in touch with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and sent a note to the High Commission concerned expressing anxiety. The FCO was helpful, and wrote to the High Commission asking for a report. They told me, as I knew already, that an entry clearance certificate was not necessary for a visit by a Commonwealth citizen. She needs to be received by me at Heathrow to satisfy the Immigration authorities.

My mother had been to Britain in 1963, 1968, and as a widow in 1974 and 1976, on each occasion as my dependant with a right to live with me. But, with one exception, each time she had left after a few months; as she missed her host of relatives and friends and did not like the cold season too much.

However, she — a non-English speaker — voluntarily went along to an unnecessary interview with the Entry Certificate Officer. My sister was not allowed to go in with her. The officer failed to inform my mother that it was strictly not needed for her to go through with the ritual for a visit only. In the end, because of an alleged discrepancy between her statements of 1974 and 1982, he refused her an entry certificate for a visit as he was not satisfied that she 'intends to stay only for this limited period'.

All this happened a few days before she was due to leave (she showed her return ticket to the ECO). I immediately formally appealed to the High Commissioner pointing out the number of times she has come and gone in spite of having *full settlement rights* in Britain, and reaffirming my personal responsibility for her return to India. The appeal was held — and disposed of — unilaterally in my mother's absence by the same Entry Certificate Officer against whose decision one was appealing.

Through all this to-ing and fro-ing the summer of 1982 passed away, and the old lady's plan of spending a period with us and her grandchildren was not fulfilled.

THE CURTAIN of the next act rose in June last year when, as principal witness and sponsor, I attended an appeal hearing in London. Of course the main characters in this drama, my mother and the ECO, were absent and hence could not be cross-examined. I had an unexpected accolade. The Home Office Presenting Officer most kindly acknowledged my integrity; there was no question of any undertaking I gave being doubted. My son's passport was examined by the Adjudicator to show the number of years he has not been to India, and hence not seen his grandmother — contrary to the claim of the ECO.

Mrs Chowdhury — who finally arrived in Britain on 22 May after waiting for nearly two years to visit her family

A close friend of ours — a Conservative knight who had met my mother here — felt so disturbed that he wrote a long note to the hearing 'extolling her character and that of the sponsor' and offered to come as a witness to speak for her.

There was no immediate verdict and another summer, alas, was also gone. About nine weeks after the hearing and after many anxious reminders, I received the result: a dismissal of the appeal.

It made curious reading. The appeal was against the ECO's lack of satisfaction about my mother being a bona fide visitor. After a rather lengthy and somewhat irrelevant rehearsal of contentions that were not brought up, the Adjudicator admitted that 'all that the applicant has to satisfy me about is that she will not overstay'.

He noted that she has not overstayed in the past, and 'indeed when allowed to settle here she returned after three months'. He declared that 'the undertaking the sponsor has given has not been challenged'. Why then demand a sponsor at all?

Two summers had now passed for my old mother. In response to a birthday greeting she wrote to her grandchildren that she would probably never see them again and hoped they would not wish her any longer life. We could not accept this perverse verdict, especially for its aspersion upon the integrity of my mother. So we made an application to review the Adjudicator's Determination and we were told it merited further consideration (such a review is not easily obtained, we were told).

This hearing took place in March this year. I was startled to see from the Adjudicator's own transcript that he had not noted my mother's unhindered visit in 1976, and worse, the Home Office Presenting Officer before him actually said 'allow appeal'. In fact, it was neither the ECO's nor the Adjudicator's business to decide whether a visitor 'will overstay'. A visitor can always apply to the Home Office to extend a visit.

ALL THIS did not amuse the Tribunal. Exclamations like 'Alice in Wonderland' came from the Bench as the Home Office representative tried hard to explain why someone who has been here four times over 20 years, with settlement rights, should now be refused a visitor's visa. As a fair man, he did not try too hard, and gracefully conceded that there were discrepancies.

The previous judgment was overturned without much ado. A matter which had been inexplicably hanging on for nearly two years, causing desperate anguish to my mother and her family, was over in a little over an hour and a half of the hearing, and the judgment was handed down in a matter of minutes.

For other British Asians in the same situation, the difficulties can be insuperable. Many are non-English speaking, fear the panoply of 'courts' and perhaps do not have influential native British friends. The statistics of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrant show that in 1982 one out of every 159 applications to visit made by relatives of Asian citizens in Britain is refused. This compares with one refusal out of every 5,344 applications from citizens of the Old Commonwealth (Canada, Australia and New Zealand).

The thought of chaining myself to Leon Brittan's home railings did often cross my mind. Yet as an integrated professional I was not supposed to behave in such a way. What would my colleagues say? Indeed what will Her Majesty the Queen say? She after all extended her hospitality to my mother (and me) some years ago at a Buckingham Palace Garden Party.

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DIARY

The Levellers' Day Festival at Burford was a sunny occasion, with a cool breeze. A crowd of us watched Tony Benn and Ken Livingstone lay wreaths at the church plaque which commemorates the three Leveller martyrs. Benn said how he'd been in on it since the ceremony started in 1977. Citizen Ken was moved and promised that London would follow Burford's example. Henceforth it will commemorate the Peasants Revolt annually. In their time, he felt sure, the Levellers must have been inspired by the example of Wat Tyler. Then the heathens gaped as the vicar gave a prayer. We sang the Red Flag and the International; or tried to. I was unable to inspire my seven-year-old with the words of the International. Awake ye starvelings from your slumber. . . There will never be a revolution in Britain until there is a new translation. However, I got her a ceramic badge of the Tolpuddle martyrs. We then skipped the History Workshop session in favour of the local wildlife park. I enjoy these events. Yet why does the Left always seem to celebrate defeats? Is it because we only have defeats to celebrate?

○

I've just read *An Old Man's Diary* by A.J.P. Taylor. Its reviewers have been too generous. They fail to mention the repetitions and contradictions that witness the author's encroaching feebleness. Of course this still leaves him twice as sharp as us ordinary mortals. But for all their praise, the reviews also failed to mention a major contribution. Taylor has come up with the best measure yet devised this side of complete disarmament for preventing nuclear war. He notes the way nuclear shelters are built for our leaders and says:

> What an extraordinary coincidence. The very people who have led us to the slaughterhouse are to be preserved. . . I had understood that the captain was always the last to leave the sinking ship, if indeed he did not go down with it. This example does not inspire the present dictators of our policy. No nonsense about 'women and children first' for them.

Reading this I realised that CND and END should now call for 'Women and Children First' or 'The International No Shelters for Leaders Treaty'. Its key clause would stipulate that all politicians, army officers, police, media editors — in short, all our 'captains' — would be banned from entering any nuclear shelter ever, no matter how childish they might be. This would ensure that in any nuclear war *they* will not survive. Such a treaty will provide the first plausible deterrent, therefore, to their ever pressing the button. According to nuclear theory, it is only instinct for survival that ensures none will risk a final war, hence it is essential, indeed urgent, that those who press the button are guaranteed to take the consequences.

○

As suits an old man, Taylor despises contemporary gimmicks and gadgets. I can imagine his caustic views about those of us who write with a computer. But I now feel about my word-box as he did about his early motor cars. I am an enthusiast, and I enjoy putting others at the keyboard and giving them a spin. Doubtless to those who have yet to be initiated nothing is more boring than two people talking about their disk capacities and function keys. But with prices beginning to crash I will soon cease to be nervous about whether readers will know what I'm talking about, especially now that adverts for special courses on computers appear in the *NS*.

○

'Are computers socialist, even though they are boring?' I suppose that is a question many *NS* readers have at the back of their minds, to express their resistance and suspicion. Of course, they are good for planning. But now even that has an ominous, authoritarian ring. And what about all that information they have stored away? Furthermore, they mean loss of jobs. It is not clear to me what economic expansion micro-electronic advances might produce to compensate for the drudgery that they abolish. But my machine has increased my own ability to write, rather than re-type; and to polish and improve on the principle that Adorno recommended.

○

Computers can also express the creative dynamism of capitalism that Marx rightly found sensational. The speed of product

innovation, the risk taking, the energy of the best computer magazines, is all very exhilarating. Something of the spirit is captured in Tracy Kidder's *The Soul of a New Machine*, published by Penguin. The Apple Macintosh has the names of the team who developed it impressed on the inside of its plastic casing. I've always believed that everyone — from the production line to the marketing team, as well as designers — should have their names on products. Equally, every time someone services a car, or mends part of a house, their name should be added to a special roll call. Present day industrial anonymity is not that of the early medieval craftsman. At any rate the productive and communications capacity of our species is increasing very fast. Already my own word-box — an Osborne made in the USA in 1982 — seems as old-fashioned as a Volkswagen beetle. And it can go wrong. One of the drives speeded up beyond its 200 revs a second and its disk got corrupted. Some hours of work was lost. A mad, night-time drive followed to my maintenance man's home to get 'Disk Doctor' — not a person but a disk that is supposed to save other disks by sending 'bad sectors' to what it flippantly labels 'The Morgue'. Very funny, but it didn't work. It is quite dreadful when a computer goes wrong because one is completely powerless. Unlike a typewriter you cannot stick in your finger to mend it. This is the only drawback.

○

The way things go wrong is one reason why I am so far unconvinced by Murray Sayle's account of the Korean Airliner disaster. Pure human error with a knob just one notch out of line? Doubtless he will have an explanation for the plane's radio silence. But I still lean to R. W. Johnson's account in the *Guardian*. Not that I think the airliner's flightpath was a US conspiracy to intensify the New Cold War, which would make the motivation too political on the American side. My guess is that some CIA guys wanted to probe what the Russians were doing. One of them said: 'Why not send in flight 007?' Being James Bond freaks they all laughed.

Islander

ROGER WODDIS

Serjeant Murray's Dance

'I would suggest to Len that he retires gracefully and gets his set of ermine robes.' — Owen Briscoe, chairman of the Yorkshire and Humberside TUC, on Len Murray's condemnation of sympathy strikes for miners.
John Arden's play, Serjeant Musgrave's Dance, *was revived this week.*

Let them accuse me of undermining,
Let them start heaping their coals of fire;
I shall go out in a blaze of ashes
When I retire.

Whenever I'm battered by storms of fury,
I shrug my shoulders and try to smile;
A leader must lead and not just follow
The rank and file.

What's wrong with quoting the constitution?
It's part of the job of a General Sec.,
But I still feel hurt when I hear the brothers
Cry for my neck.

My moderation will be rewarded,
Though ermine robes make the workers wince.
Still I prefer, to the march of history,
The Murray mince.

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Rhetoric has given way

Papandreou's PASOK has finally held its first party conference. Yiannis Roubatis shows how his government has reversed its position on American bases

Athens

GREEK SOCIALIST history was made this month. From 10 to 13 May the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) held a party conference — the first since the movement was formed ten years ago, on 3 September 1974.

PASOK's victory in the October 1981 elections was a spectacular success for the young Greek socialist party. It had campaigned on a platform of anti-imperialism in foreign policy and anti-capitalism at home. But after electoral success came the confrontation with reality. The 'visions' of the electoral campaign had to be adjusted to this reality.

The Greek Right, with help from its allies abroad, particularly the Americans, had entangled the country in agreements that could only be undone by revolutionary will. But these are not revolutionary times in Greece. The result has been that the party that went into conference on 10 May was very different from the one that had set off down the socialist road in September 1974.

The differences were most pronounced over foreign policy. When PASOK formed its government, it did not take Greece out of NATO, or the EEC, and it did not immediately end the presence of US bases in Greece.

To be fair it was obvious in the months immediately before the October 1981 elections that the socialist party wanted its positions on these matters to remain 'fuzzy'. But Dr Andreas Papandreou and members of his government have denied that this was or is so. They deny that their position on these issues has shifted from the 1974 PASOK stand.

The 'Declaration of Basic Principles and Objectives' which launched PASOK on 3 September 1974, however, leaves them with little room for argument. 'Of course Greece must withdraw from the military and political (parts) of NATO. Of course, all bilateral agreements that permitted the Pentagon to transform Greece into a base of operations for the advancement of its expansionist policy must be abolished', it declared. Objective No. 11 was even more specific:

> All international agreements and treaties that have led Greece to an economic, political and military dependence on the monopolist organisations of the West, and especially those of American imperialism, are to be abolished.

THIS MONTH's 'Report of the Central Committee of PASOK to the Party Conference' was much less decisive on these issues. Referring to the agreement on defence and economic cooperation that the Greek government signed with the US last year the report said:

> It is the position of PASOK that foreign bases be withdrawn from our country because our national interest demands it. It is within this (context) that the agreement for the withdrawal of the bases was signed. . . . Given the existing international configuration of forces, the historical as well as the present conditions in our more general geopolitical area, and the need to safeguard the high level of preparedness of the armed forces of the country, this agreement constitutes a milestone and a point of departure for the substantive safeguarding of our national independence.

In these phrases lies the best example of the kind of readjustment that has had to be made to the rhetoric of PASOK since coming to power. The most important element relates to the threat from Turkey. Papandreou has spoken on several occasions about the 'marked cards' with which the game of relations between the United States, Greece, Turkey and the divided island of Cyprus is played. But, it seems, he had not taken fully into account how stacked the deck really was.

In the West few understand how significant the Turkish threat appears to all Greeks — no matter what their ideological position. American Administrations, however, particularly the present one, know exactly how to use the threat to get what they want in Greece.

The 1974 invasion by Turkey of Northern Cyprus (and its subsequent violations of Greek air and sea space) had already poisoned such relations as existed between the two countries. A new low was reached with the 'recognition' by Turkey (with ambassadors exchanged) of the 'Turkish Federated State of Northern Cyprus' at the end of last year.

In Greek eyes the Cyprus issue is only one (admittedly central) part of the three-pronged Turkish expansionism in the area — the other two prongs being in the Aegean and in Western Thrace. For Greeks, so long as the United States and NATO refuse to check this Turkish expanisionism, Greece continues to be under threat; and isolated in its struggle to preserve its very existence. They feel that their Western allies, particularly the United States, pursue a one dimensional (pro-Turkish) policy in the area in the interests of US geo-strategic interests in the Eastern Mediterranean.

WHAT EXCITED the Greek people about PASOK, indeed, was its promise to put an end to this position. The idea that for the first time in decades Greece would pursue its own national interest — rather than that of the Western 'allies' — was novel for most Greeks. The possibility of a Greek voice being heard on a wider international stage was even more attractive.

But the fear of having to go to war with

John Minnion

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Turkey has in the meanwhile forced PASOK and the Greek government to come to understandings with the United States, NATO and the Greek armed forces themselves.

So far as the US is concerned, the key to this understanding has been the agreement on American bases. It became obvious once negotiations had started over the future of the bases at the end of 1982 (and especially in the final stages in the late summer of 1983) that the US and its seasoned negotiators had the advantage over the amateurish Greek side. To some observers it looked as if, given the Turkish threat in the Aegean, the Greek side wanted to get the negotiations over with quickly, so as to get on with placing orders for American arms.

The Greek Left rejects the arguments that the bases agreement represents a turning point in Greek-American relations. It puts an end to the completely unchecked presence of American forces in Greece. But it is a long way from putting an end to the American presence in the country.

Government officials now argue that taking Greece out of NATO (as promised in the 1974 PASOK declaration) would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. If it happened, they say, the alliance would call in Turkish forces on its behalf into areas that are now under Greek control. The Greek Left has to swallow this unpleasant argument, or risk being called 'unpatriotic'.

Patriotism cannot be dismissed lightly in Greece. Given the certainty that a PASOK government would never give in to pressures put on it to satisfy Turkish demands, the Papandreou administration is surprisingly popular with the country's armed forces. The Prime Minister also holds the defence portfolio and it is obvious that he and the army have a healthy respect for each other.

This has led to disappointment that the government has not moved faster in the direction of 'democratisation' of the armed forces. The recently announced new army code does not go very far to satisfy those who hoped that the reform would signal the end of the old military 'structures' created in the past by Greece's 'allies'. The government seems to have given in on the issue of reform in order not to upset the conservatives in the armed forces and the President, Mr Konstantinos Karamanlis, who is particularly sensitive to military interests.

A week before the party conference a decision was taken that has led to further questioning of PASOK's determination to find 'alternative sources' for weapons for the Greek armed forces — a promise contained in this year's Central Committee's report. The two highest government committees on foreign policy and defence — meeting jointly and with Papandreou presiding — decided on a programme of modernisation of the Greek Air Force. No announcements were made, but there are few in Athens who doubt that the new advanced aircraft will be of American manufacture.

This decision will please the air force. But how can it be reconciled with 'putting an end' to the influence that the Americans would exert on Greece, especially at times of national emergency? □

Yiannis Roubatis is a political correspondent of TO VIMA *in Athens.*

LIBYA

Revenge of Islam

Alan George on the most serious challenge yet to Colonel Gadafy

Tripoli

THE GUN BATTLE which erupted in the Libyan capital Tripoli on 8 May was widely reported to have been an attack by Libyan dissidents on the Bab al Aziziyeh barracks in the south of the city, which Colonel Gadafy uses as a headquarters. The *New Statesman*, however, has spoken to a British businessman who was nearby throughout the fighting. He has confirmed that there was no attack on the barracks. The battle broke out, he said, when the Libyan authorities launched a pre-emptive raid on dissidents holed-up in an apartment block.

The Tripoli battle was the most serious single sign of opposition to Colonel Gadafy since he seized power in 1969, and it has reportedly been followed by intensive house-to-house searches in Tripoli. It came amid a spate of arson incidents in the Libyan capital, said to be the work of dissidents, in which targets have included a large state-owned supermarket and the auditorium at Tripoli University. Benghazi, Libya's second largest city, has also been the scene of recent sabotage operations. On 25 March a massive explosion rocked a nearby army depot, leaving scores dead or wounded.

Involvement in the Tripoli gun battle has been claimed by the Islamic fundamentalist National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL), the largest and most effective of the groups opposed to Gadafy. On 9 May their radio in Omdurman offered an heroic account of the incident. But the *NS* has learned that the Libyan authorities were in fact braced for an attack. Road blocks went up in both Tripoli and Benghazi well *before* shots were heard. The fighting erupted at 8.15 am, and centred on a four-storey apartment block just off Jamahiriya Street, about half a mile north of the Aziziyeh barracks.

At first, the dissidents within came under small arms fire from plaincloths security men. The regular army arrived half an hour later, evacuated neighbouring buildings, and opened up with automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades.

If the dissidents had retreated to the building after an attack on the barracks, they would have been fighting a running battle with the army. Yet no shooting was heard before the gun battle at the apartment block.

The fighting continued until 2.30 pm. By then, the front of the building had been blown off. Reports circulating in Tripoli afterwards said that 11 gunmen were killed in the apartment block, and five or six Libyan soldiers had died.

Two days before, three dissidents were intercepted while entering Libya from Tunisa. Ahmad Ahwas, a leading figure in the NFSL, was killed. The two others were arrested and Libya says that they provided the address of the Tripoli apartment block.

There is no clear evidence, however, that the two groups of armed dissidents were planning a joint operation. Libyan dissident sources in London have indicated that the infiltrators from Tunisia were planning an attack on the town of Gharian, 80 kilometres southwest of the Libyan capital, which commands a major crossroads. The Gharian operation was timed for the Sunday — two days before the Tripoli battle.

The identity of the armed group in Tripoli remains unclear, although there are indications that the official Libyan version is near the truth. Gadafy says that they were members of the Muslim Brothers — an extreme right-wing organisation which has long opposed him. Sources in the NFSL in London will say only that 'our people were involved', suggesting that the armed men were drawn mainly from another, though allied, organisation. The NFSL, however, is believed to have links with the Muslim Brothers.

Moreover, it seems likely that the armed group was preparing an attack on Gadafy's heavily-guarded headquarters. This would have ended with their deaths, but such suicidal missions are not unusual for Islamic fundamentalists.

The dissidents' operation was bungled, but Gadafy's opponents have scored a major propaganda victory. However, they have also provided the Colonel with a pretext for a round of repression against the opposition, which will leave the Libyan leader in an immediately much stronger position. □

ITALY

Leftists on trial

Konrad Brodzinski reports on a five year old case

Rome

THE '7TH APRIL' trial is about to come to an end in Rome. It has been so called from the date, 7 April 1979, when most of the present 71 defendants were first arrested and charged with crimes ranging from theft (to finance subversive activities) to the kidnapping and murder of Christian Democrat ex-Premier Aldo Moro.

The Moro murder charge levelled against a political philosophy professor, Toni Negri, and several of his associates, was leter dropped. Police interrogation of Red Brigade terrorists had discovered that there had been no collusion over Moro between the Red Brigades and the organisation of which Negri was purported to

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be the chief theoretician: the *Autonomia Operaia*. The charge was then changed to a more general one of 'subversion' and 'belonging to an armed gang', plus a list of specific crimes such as robbery, arson, kidnapping and, in the case of four of the 71 defendants, murder.

Autonomia Operaia (literally 'Workers' Autonomy') is one of the many left-wing movements which arose after the events of 1968 in Italy. Some of the post-1968 groups — such as the Proletarian Democracy and the Proletarian Unity Party — ended up in Parliament, as small parties to the left of the Communists. Others stayed outside Parliament and finally dissolved in the mid-1970s. Among these was *Potere Operaio* ('Workers' Power'), whose supposed leaders are now implicated in the 7th April trial. The charge is that *Potere Operaio* ceased operating actively only to associate itself clandestinely with its sister group, the *Autonomia*.

According to the prosection, this merger led to two levels of political activity: one overt — Autonomia sympathisers run private radio stations and participate in demonstrations — and one covert, which the prosecution has variously named 'Organised Autonomy' or simply 'the Organisation', aimed, ultimately, at overthrowing the State.

Defence lawyers have argued that the prosecution's case rests on an artificial 'theorem', constructed in the year following the killing of Aldo Moro when police and investigating judges, often themselves targets of terrorist attacks, were particularly zealous in stamping out armed subversion and created a spectre of a political 'grand design', coordinated with the Red Brigades. They say that 'Organised Autonomy' is little more than a random collection of activists from North and Central Italy, of whom some gave theoretical support to violence (Negri's Marxist writings form a substantial part of the prosecution's case), others may actually have taken part in violent acts, but the majority were simply, like so many idealists in post-1968 Italy, involved in what they felt to be a general 'movement'.

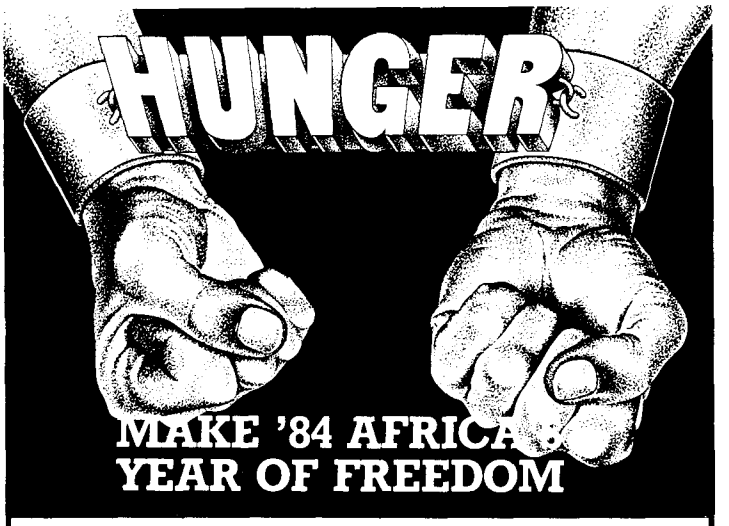
The public prosecutor, for his part, has repeatedly stated that the trial 'is one of facts, not ideas'. He has asked for life imprisonment for Negri, as the organiser, though not the perpetrator, of a number of crimes, the most serious of which was an armed robbery in which an officer of the Carabinieri was killed and another seriously wounded. Silvana Marelli, Egidio Monferdin and Gianfranco Pancino are accused with Negri of murder resulting from a bungled kidnap attempt. Oreste Scalzone faces three charges of attempted murder.

Other specific charges range from arson to petty theft. The prosecution has asked for heavy penalties: 30 of the defendants face sentences of between 10 and 29 years — even though 15 of them have not been charged with any specific crime at all, other than the blanket accusation of 'subversive association' and 'belonging to an armed gang'.

THE TRIAL has become a *cause célèbre*, not so much for the far Left itself — which is licking its wounds and trying to re-orientate itself after a period of political violence — as for civil rights activists who are afraid that Italy may lose, as a reaction to the violence of the 1970s, some of the liberties won in the 1960s. Thus most of the 7th April defendants have spent substantial periods in prison without trial, under a retrospective 'emergency' law — periodically renewed — which allows people suspected of organised violence to be kept in 'preventive custody' for an initial period of up to four years. This is to allow an investigating magistrate to prepare his case. They can then be held for up to six years and eight months pending appeal.

Some of the 7th April defendants in fact, were served fresh arrest warrants from magistrates investigating other cases while they were already in prison. With each new warrant, their period of 'preventive custody' began anew. So strong was public feeling against this 'temporary measure' that, when the civil rights-orientated Radical Party put up Toni Negri as a candidate in the June 1983 general election, he was elected and immediately released from prison, because the law guarantees parliamentarians immunity from prosecution. When, however, Parliament voted by a narrow margin (the maverick Radicals tilted the balance by abstaining) to remove his immunity, Negri fled the country and now lives as a political refugee in Paris.

Another controversial law passed to combat terrorism gave preferential treatment to so-called *pentiti*. In order to get terrorists to collaborate with the police, three categories of defendant were distinguished: the *pentito*



Africa's worst drought for fifty years means more than newspaper headlines. Thousands are starving to death every day, infant mortality is rising, and disease is rampant.

For the 'lucky ones' there is a chance to flee their homes and land in search of work or relief supplies – and end up swelling overcrowded refugee camps and urban slums. But for every farmer who leaves the land today more mouths will go unfed next year – as untended land, animals and farms deteriorate, and harvests are missed.

Aid is needed now to help farmers stay on their land. With better water conservation, enough seeds and tools, peasant farmers can work miracles from the parched land. War on Want urgently needs your help to back its emergency programme of direct assistance to farmers in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Cape Verde and Zimbabwe. Freedom from hunger must be the aim of '84.

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(repentant of his or her crimes); the *dissociato* (who 'dissociate' from the movement without actively helping the police with their investigations); and the *irrudicibile* (the hard-liners).

The choice of the term *pentito* is characteristic of Italy's Catholic culture and implies a moral reassessment, but in practice it is difficult to differentiate between suspects who genuinely regret their actions and those who essentially do no more than grass on their associates in the hope of getting a milder sentence. The operation of this law has produced ludicrous anomolies. Thus the Red Brigade leader Marco Barbone, the self-confessed murderer of Walter Tobagi, a journalist of the Milan daily *Corriere della Sera*, is now free after less than three years in prison; while Andrea Leoni, the presumed 'ideologue' of a minor terrorist group, who was never charged with any specific crime, is serving a 30 year prison sentence.

The 7th April case, too, has its *pentiti*, foremost of whom is Carlo Fioroni, originally a defendant, later set free after his statements to the investigating magistrate. Many of the prosecution's specific charges are based exclusively on Fioroni's testimony which, in accordance with Italian law on the initial investigative phase of a case, was never made public. Hopes that the trial would finally allow a public confrontation between the defendants and the key prosecution witness were dashed when Fioroni failed to appear in court. The chief of Italian police, Rinaldo Coronas, later testified at the trial that Fioroni had left Italy on a false passport in March 1982, with the blessing of the Prime Minister himself who was anxious to protect him under the law on *pentiti*. Since initially it was Fioroni who was charged with the kidnapping and murder of his friend Carlo Saronio — one of the most serious charges facing Negri, Marelli, Monferdin and Pancino — his testimony would have been of more than academic interest.

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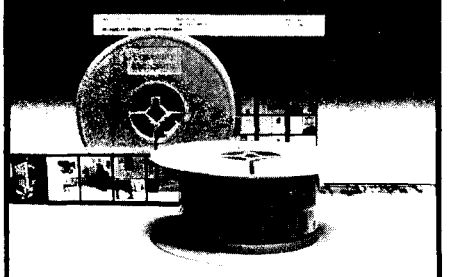

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With the trial's two main protagonists — Negri and Fioroni — absent, interest in the case has dropped and the final sentence is unlikely to make big headlines. But further trials of real or presumed terrorist groups are lined up in Rome, Milan and other major Italian cities for months (maybe years) ahead. And two thirds of Italy's 43,000 prisoners are still in 'preventive custody'. That is why the 7th April case is a symbol of Italy's difficulty in coming to terms with its traumatic period of 1970s terrorism and the legal overreaction to it. □

AGENT ORANGE

Business decision

Susan Jaffe reports on the record out of court settlement

New York

OVER 100,000 Americans alone are listed by the US military as having been exposed to the defoliant Agent Orange. They stand to gain from the $180 million that the seven manufacturers of Agent Orange agreed this month to pay into a special trust fund for the victims. Together with interest this fund could grow to $250 million — available to be paid out to American, Australian and New Zealand veterans of Vietnam between 1961 and 1972 with claims that their health has been damaged by exposure to the chemical.

The out of court settlement was unprecedented. It is the largest sum ever paid in a personal injury case. It covers a record number of individuals, possibly including children not yet born. Wives and children of the 'vets' will also be able to claim assistance for 25 years.

But in return there will now be no trial of the manufacturing companies' liability for negligence, no jury verdict linking the deadly dioxin in the defoliant with cancer cases and defective births. And no one will be required to take official responsibility for those who continue to die so long after the war has ended.

In return the chemical companies are not required to admit any liability at all and are protected from any further veterans' law suits (though wives and families are still free to sue). They also cannot be required to pay any more than the $180 million to the fund. But, as Dan Jordan, a veteran from Austin, Texas, said 'Would you pay $180 million if you weren't guilty?' Jordan was to have testified in the trial. His two sons were born with deformed hands and, in addition, his wife had a miscarriage in 1972.

The fact is that the chemical companies could not afford the risk of the trial finding them guilty of negligence over Agent Orange, with associated awards of high punative damages. The US Environmental Protection Agency has already found dioxin in waste dumps in at least 35 states. In one residential area near a chemical factory in New Jersey dioxin concentrations were found at 1,200 times the 'safe' level. Law suits have already been filed against the same companies named in the Agent Orange case by people living near this dump. A finding or admission of liability in the Vietnam veterans' case would have been vital support for the cases of those exposed to dioxin in the US itself.

Wall Street reacted with relief to the news of the settlement. The one off payment of $180 million removed a serious threat to the financial future of the companies concerned. It will hardly dent the profits of the seven companies (well over $1 billion in the first quarter of 1984 alone) and in any case insurance will cover most of the expense. The share prices of all seven companies rose smartly on the news.

'We regard this resolution as a business decision', said a spokesman for Dow Chemical, the leading Agent Orange producer. A trial would have been a drain on management and dollars and 'It would have been very difficult for a jury to sort out the complex scientific issues in this highly emotional case'. (Internal Dow Chemical documents released during the pre-trial proceedings in fact showed that the company knew as early as 1965 that dioxin cause serious and potentially fatal damage to humans, but continued to sell it to the US government until 1970.)

THE CHEMICAL companies may be satisfied with the outcome, but it falls far short of what the Vietnam servicemen originally expected. At the start, in 1979, their lawyers were talking of claims totalling $40 billion. But in the end the advice was that a settlement offered a better outcome than years more of legal wrangling and appeals.

In particular there was doubt as to whether several pre-trial rulings in their favour would be upheld by an Appeals Court. This applied especially to ground-breaking decisions by Federal Judge Jack B. Weinstein that a group of veterans could sue (as a 'class action') on behalf of all Vietnam veterans; and that all seven companies could be sued, regardless of which one actually made the chemical that affected a particular veteran.

Also, for some of the victims time was running out. Several had already died in the five years it took to get the case before Judge Weinstein. 'We would have won a trial,' said George Ewalt, a vet from Philadelphia with liver and nerve damage and skin cancer; but 'it would have been a long and drawn out affair and time is short for veterans with problems and for their children'.

Although the Agent Orange case is now over, law suits are still pending against the US government. It was not involved in the settlement and has refused to pay disability benefits to veterans with a whole range of ailments related to exposure to Agent Orange. Two of the chemical companies are suing the government for misusing the defoliant. Although by law American service personnel cannot sue the military for injuries suffered on active duty, suits by their families against the government are also planned.

But for now, in the words of Victor Yannacone Jr, the environmental lawyer who began the fight in 1979, 'The veterans have won the final battle of the Vietnam War'. □

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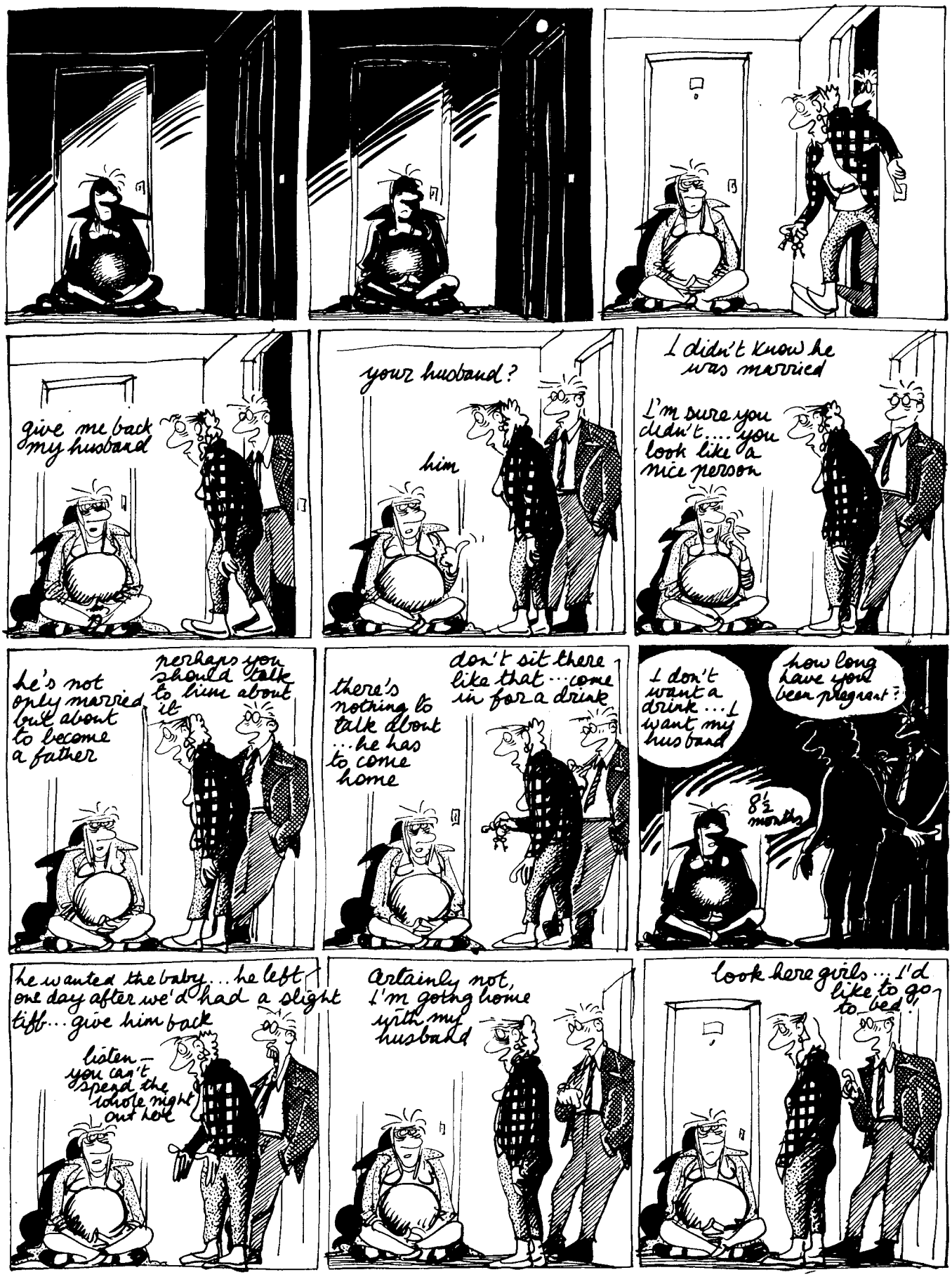
BRETECHER

SIT-IN


give me back my husband
your husband?
him
I didn't know he was married
I'm sure you didn't.... you look like a nice person
he's not only married but about to become a father
perhaps you should talk to him about it
there's nothing to talk about ..he has to come home
don't sit there like that ...come in for a drink
I don't want a drink ...I want my husband
how long have you been pregnant?
8½ months
he wanted the baby... he left one day after we'd had a slight tiff... give him back
listen — you can't spend the whole night out here
certainly not, I'm going home with my husband
look here girls ... I'd like to go to bed.

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LETTERS

Policy in a twist

John Lloyd, London SW9

Your editorial of 11 May, and Clive Soley's article on the Forum report on Northern Ireland, both highlight the tangle into which the Labour Party has got over its policy on the province's future — a tangle in large part created by the Party's refusal to take account of the wishes of the NI people.

The 'veto' which you and Clive Soley insist that the NI Protestants have over progress to an all-Ireland settlement is the wish of the majority, expressed in every kind of test of opinion over the past 15 years, to remain part of the UK. Clive Soley rejects the use of force to coerce them into a united Ireland (an advance on some sections of the Labour Party), but then talks of 'the creation of all-Ireland institutions such as an economic development council, a common criminal justice system and the harmonising of social and economic structures... (over which) no group in Northern Ireland should have a veto...'

The creation of such institutions would be seen, rightly, as united Ireland by stealth and would be resisted as in the past: then what? The uncomfortable fact is — it is one which the Provisional IRA are remarkably clearheaded about — questions of nationality are not open to endless negotiation and compromise.

It is time the Labour Party listened to those socialists in the Province who argue that further attempts at all-Ireland solutions should now be scrapped in favour of acceptance, for the foreseeable future, of the reality of the majority's wishes: and that the establishment of the Labour Party in Northern Ireland would assist in the creation of a non-sectarian party of Labour with some hopes, over time, of uniting the communities. Labour Party policy is unity *by consent*: when and if it comes, let it be by consent, not by sleight of hand.

Let the people judge

Conrad Jameson, London SW7

I was delighted to see Jules Lubbock popping the self-legitimating fantasy of modern architecture that good taste is what dribbles down to the people from great architects and the enlightened few. If it is an Inigo Jones and a Charles I who created the English square, reasons Sir John Summerson, surely we too must be willing to follow the lead of our aesthetic betters. A James Stirling, a Richard Rogers, an RIBA president, Michael Manser — not to mention the cultivated developer, Peter Palumbo — all favour the posthumous design of Mies van der Rohe for a Lego-like office block for the site next to the Bank of England. Who are we to disagree?

But the supporting historical theory is nonsense and nowhere more so, as Lubbock shows, than in Summerson's own favourite example: the vernacular square came first and Inigo Jones's surrounding classical façades came later.

So far so good. Yet if the argument stops where Lubbock leaves it, the people lose even before they learn to resist. For ultimately the argument about the controversial Mansion House site isn't about Good Taste at all — and still less is it about honesty or a commitment to the art of our time and the rest of the claptrap still hurled about by modern architects as if modernism were still the bright young thing of the Tens and Twenties. The argument is about propriety — *decorum* in the language of classical architecture which always put it first among architectural virtues. Whether we want a giant office block towering, Gulliver fashion, over the Bank of England is first and last a question, not about art, but about our own moral beliefs.

And just because the question *is* about our moral beliefs, the people must be the judge, not self-appointed guardians of public taste. The matter is as simple as that.

All in a picture?

Mark Cunningham, Ampleforth College, York

I was astounded reading your article on 'The dirty War' in Northern Ireland (*NS* 4 May). It seemed to me remarkable that Robert Nairac should only now be revealed as a cold-blooded killer — when Captain Holroyd held such damning evidence against him throughout the investigations — six or seven years following Nairac's death.

Although I did not know Robert Nairac, I know his family and many of his friends. Everyone regards it as totally out of keeping with his character to have broken the law and killed a man in this way. Nairac was not only a very brave man, as his killers testified, but also an extremely popular and sensible person. That he could have planned and executed such a killing is inconceivable.

If he was an efficient and dangerous killer, it seems equally extraordinary that he should have carried around on his person such a telling piece of evidence and even more implausible that he showed it, readily boasted about the killing and was willing to surrender the picture. That photograph is the only piece of hard evidence condemning him. But can Captain Holroyd's story be believed? Is it credible that such a highly trained SAS officer could incriminate himself in such a foolish manner?

The politics of alienation

Colin Robertson, Secretary, Westminster BDC, NUPE

The two articles in the 18 May *New Statesman* 'Mopping up the unions' and 'Feedback — Unions disunited' each appeared a natural corollary of the other. We have on the one hand a trade union membership for the most part alienated from politics and on the other hand various individual struggles desperately seeking means to widen the battleground and make victory possible.

Vacillation in leadership is a natural result of lack of confidence in mass support and that lack of support is the inevitable result of vacillation in the leadership of both the Labour Party and the trade unions. We seem locked into a closed circle leaving the way open for 'There is no alternative' policies to gain ground.

Many trade union activists in their increasing isolation naturally find partial escape into the fringe groups of the Left, thereby increasing their isolation from the mass trade union membership. Rightly they view the behaviour of the leadership of the Labour Party and the unions as a natural result of the incompatability of partial socialism existing in a capitalist environment. Similarly this incompatability is obvious, in a different way, to the mass union membership.

The 'Barking dispute' is a classic example of what the unions are fighting, of the necessity for spreading the action and of the political reality behind the struggle. The outcome of that dispute will have major consequences for the future of the trade unions and the Labour Party.

Labouring women

Valerie Foley, Rayleigh, Essex

The report of the recent conference of Labour Women at Swansea (*NS* 18 May) suggests that the Women's Action Committee may indeed be moving faster than the Labour movement as a whole, but it is moving in the wrong direction.

Instead of demanding privileges for women's conference, the young radical women who have flowed into the party in the last few years should consider becoming more closely involved at the grass roots of the Labour Party. Many women want to see improvements in the quality of life for ordinary women. They are anxious that the provision of nursery places should be expanded; that equal opportunities should exist for girls in education; that women should have equal employment opportunities; that sexist advertising should be monitored; that women's health needs should be met more adequately than in most areas at present. Unfortunately none of these things will be done by separating women's organisations from the main body of the Labour Party. Women are full members of the party, and can be involed in the business of the party at all levels. Women can be elected to their constituency General Management Committee, to their constituency executive, as delegates to annual conference and on to panels for candidates in local and national elections. This is the way to make progress.

Women are entitled to take a full part in the debates at local level in constituency parties. There is usually a great demand for people to take office in the party, as branch secretaries, treasurers and chairpersons. The sex of the person does not matter when it comes to canvassing, addressing envelopes, delivering leaflets.

The Labour Party needs to project itself as the party of the ordinary woman worker. If individual women find it difficult to speak at meetings, they can find support in the local women's sections or councils. This is one good reason for the continued existence of women's organisations. The way forward is not to demand that Women's Conference be empowered to send resolutions to National Conference, but to work in local parties to convince men and women of the need for change. It is of considerable concern that few trade unions sent delegations to Women's Conference this year, as it suggests that the work of dividing the party further has already begun. To work effectively for socialism, which we all want, women should not separate themselves from the main structure of the Labour Party.

Scholarship and s/m?

Adrianne Blue, London E1

It is certainly my view that the sado-masochism debate has been over-emphasised by American feminists — politically an error of tactics, sexually, for so many, an irrelevance. But I do not, and did not in my review (*NS* 23 March), question the right of the editors of *Desire: The Politics of Sexuality* to devote 'nearly 100 pages' to the subject and its ramifications. Not just in the 88-page section on 'Domination, Submission and the Unconscious'; and never salaciously, indeed usually in a scholarly, even stodgy, fashion. But, like Eileen Phillips, the editor of *The Left and the Erotic*, the other useful book then under review, my aim, 'rather than legislating behaviour' was and is to 'nudge a toe gingerly into the debate over what might constitute sexual freedom'.

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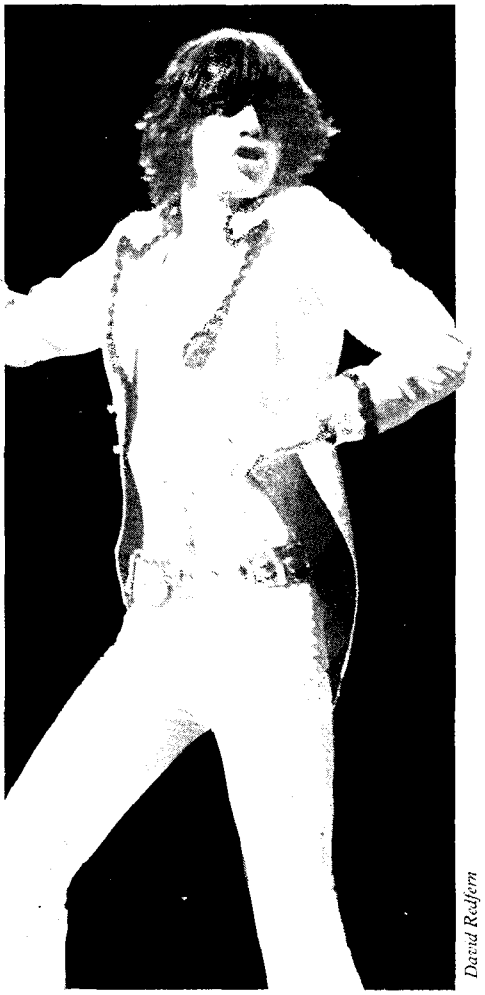
Jon Cook

Not fade away

The Stones
PHILIP NORMAN *Elm Tree Books* £8.95



David Redfern

The Rolling Stones are in an odd situation. Old enough to be remembered, and therefore old enough to be forgotten, they are one of the few rock bands from the early Sixties who can still make a passable show of working together, cranking out records and concert performances with detached skill and self-parodic grace. In one sense Philip Norman's book helps to compound the oddity rather than resolve it.

The book appears to be sanctioned by the group: Norman has had access to them and to those of their associates who have survived to tell the tale. As a result *The Stones* is full of the kind of information that insiders think fit for the ears of outsiders, and there's always just enough of it to leave you guessing. This may be, of course, because the information simply isn't there to solve some of the mysteries: was the notorious Redlands drug raid the result of an informer who had managed to get close to Jagger and Richards and, if so, who was he? Was Brian Jones's death an accident or was he murdered? Norman has obviously worked hard on his sources and, although he's unable to solve these mysteries, he wants to hold out the possibility that there's something more sensational to be told. In this respect he's true to the genre of show-business biography: sensational revelations about the lives of the famous, the sordid reality behind the glamour, but always, amid the revelations, the mystique preserved and even enhanced. Good knockabout stuff, of course, and the Stones' lives are full of enough naughty secrets to make Norman's book a compulsively readable example of the genre. It's like good gossip: you always want to be told more while you always suspect that you're not being told the truth.

But *The Stones* has pretensions to be more than just show-biz biography. We are invited to see the life of the group as a sign of the times. There are some deft touches here. Norman writes well about the South London childhoods of Mick Jagger and Keith Richards. What we get is a sense of the cultural underside of the post-war welfare state, the opportunity for a fertile boredom with a secure existence that drew the members of the group to the excitement of rhythm and blues. But Norman's basic account is secured by familiar stereotypes. Post-war culture is classified into decades, each carrying its label more or less explicitly. The effect of this is to encapsulate the recent past in a way that lends the story a pastoral charm which can encompass even the most destructive episodes in the life of the group. Keith Richards's prolonged heroin addiction or Brian Jones's near psychopathic violence towards women take on an eerie nostalgic glow. They become so many passages in a legend which it is the book's purpose to promulgate rather than explore.

The deficiencies of this as an approach to a biography of the Stones are most evident in Norman's treatment of their music. He notes the unevenness of their output, a judgment which is both obviously right and obviously irrelevant. Each single or album is assessed in terms of the immediate story of its production. So if the Stones' first single, *Come On*, was made in crude and haphazard circumstances that makes it a crude and haphazard song. But the song seemed very different when it first appeared. Compulsive, mechanical, obsessive, it gave voice to frustration as an intolerable form of life, and all this was made the more effective and memorable because the whole song had to be repeated in a different key to stretch it out to sufficient pop-single length. Few songs could have established the group's forte so well or, most importantly for the time, so advertised their difference from the Beatles. *Love Me Do, Please Please Me, From Me to You*, as their titles suggest, were all very much in the idiom of the conventional romantic pop song. The Beatles certainly brought an exuberance and humour to their material which distinguished their approach from the sentimental norm. But they remained firmly in the world of romance, whereas the Stones' strong suit was their capacity to symbolise the psychic damage hidden by the mainstream treatment of love. *Let It Bleed* was the apt title of their best album: the idea was to lance the wound and then see what came out.

Nervous breakdown, sado-masochistic sex, psychopathic violence: these formed the basis of the contract of fantasy the Stones established between themselves and their audience. Their achievement, whether intended or not, was to invent a musical theatre in which such things could be dramatised and made available to a mass audience. This was their major crime, and one for which there was no punishment available on the statute books. The many could now participate in a fantasy world which had previously been the preserve of the aristocracy or of psychoanalysts in discreet offices. The guardians of the law could arrest the group only for secondary crimes like drug taking or pissing against garage walls.

It was bound to end in trouble, serious trouble. Norman reminds us how many of the Stones' concerts began or ended in riot and mayhem, culminating in the murder at Altamont. As individuals the members of the group could hardly be expected to comprehend the forces their performance could bring to a focus. The book reveals them as simply not knowing what they were about, or refusing to acknowledge it, or, in Jagger's case, flirting with the power produced between the band and its audience. Who was responsible was an impossible question to answer, given the collective character of the phenomenon. Better to appear as the contemporary incarnation of some Gothic fantasy: the living dead, pale, wasted and thin even in the midst of prosperity, at once master and victim of the twisted energies represented in their songs.

And then, of course, there was always the security of show business. Whatever collective fantasy they dramatised the Stones emerged out of show business and have become increasingly absorbed back into it. The band has become an efficient money-making organisation, putting on a show for an audience rather than being the focal point for a highly charged collective spectacle. Norman's book gives a close-up sense of all the hustling and deceit that attached to the Stones as a bankable product but he seems unable to grasp the larger forces in play. This inability can have a damaging effect on his prose, notably in the set pieces which try to recreate the atmosphere of the most famous concerts. Too much strain is put on a visual notation in an attempt to conjure the unseen and the effect is like having too much grease in your hair. *The Stones* is a well-intentioned and readable book but it fails to grasp that an adequate biography of the group has to be one of fantasy as well as of fact. □

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BIOGRAPHY
Bob Woffinden

Mind to murder

'... somebody's husband, somebody's son': The Story of Peter Sutcliffe
GORDON BURN *Heinemann* £9.95

Reading this book is a thoroughly unpleasant experience, but that's hardly the fault of Gordon Burn. The story of the Yorkshire Ripper is the most sickening in modern criminology. After Peter Sutcliffe's conviction, Burn spent two years in Bingley, trying to piece together an accurate, un-dramatised portrait of the murderer.

Sutcliffe had a doting mother and a father who was himself enigmatic. John Sutcliffe was not only an energetic and gifted sportsman and a stalwart of local operatic and dramatic societies, but an inveterate liberty-taker with the opposite sex. He considered his eldest son 'a right mother's boy from the word go' and, as a boy, Sutcliffe was an introverted weakling. He became a dedicated disciple of the Bullworker but, in contrast to his father, fought shy of female company.

In the late Sixties he was publicly humiliated by a prostitute who had swindled him out of £10, an experience which, he claimed, pushed him 'over the brink'. Earlier, he'd worked for some time in Bingley cemetery becoming, as one of his sisters explained, 'used to death'. Eventually he married Sonia Szurma, a woman who herself underwent psychiatric treatment in the early Seventies and whose obsession with cleanliness was such that Sutcliffe himself was denied the use of the household washing-machine.

And so the picture of a mass murderer is assembled piece by piece. In the final analysis, however, Burn doesn't succeed in his admittedly Himalayan task of penetrating the mind of a monster. What was it that made this man so uniquely, so viciously sadistic? Too much remains unexplained — in particular, the hiatus between the first signs of Sutcliffe's violent antipathy to prostitutes in 1969 and the commencement of his misogynist brutalities in 1975.

Did he continue to kill to live up to the legend the media were creating around him? Or because he found it increasingly difficult to restrain his blood-lust? For all his scrupulous research, Burn doesn't find the answers. Of course, he was deprived of the counsel of the two most important people — Sutcliffe himself and Sonia, who permitted only a brief interview and who has since tried to prevent the book's publication.

About two aspects of the case, there is less uncertainty. The first is the incredible incompetence and disarray of the West Yorkshire police. Sutcliffe was an intelligent killer, but he made what should have been his fatal mistake when he left a freshly-minted £5 note in the handbag of his sixth victim. To attribute his eventual capture to 'good coppering', as the police did, was little less than a sick joke.

The other is the final maladministration of justice, the triumph of social and political expediency over the legal process. After Sutcliffe had murdered, and mutilated the bodies of, at least 13 wholly innocent women, the Attorney-General of this country set out to prove that these were the deeds of a sane man. This was perhaps the craziest twist of all. The question which needed answering was not, Was he mad? but rather, With what form of madness was he afflicted?

According to a number of eminent psychiatrists who gave evidence at the trial, it was paranoid schizophrenia. Their testimony was rejected by the jury but has lately been upheld by the Home Office — although Sutcliffe's transfer from Parkhurst to Broadmoor obviously occurred too recently to be mentioned here.

I have always enjoyed Burn's pieces for the *Sunday Times*, but this book would have benefited from careful editing. There is a great deal of convoluted sentence construction, some odd phonetic spellings ('draws' for 'drawers' and 'review' for 'revue') and a grand total of 15 split infinitives.

Sutcliffe's favourite brother, Carl, got a new house and an MGB out of the whole affair, courtesy of the *Daily Star*. Other members of the family were bankrolled by the press and are now deemed worthy of David Bailey portraits in the *Sunday Times*.

The mother of the Yorkshire Ripper's last victim, Doreen Hill, who showed courage and dignity in trying to outlaw chequebook journalism, lost not only her daughter Jacqueline but also, soon afterwards, her husband Jack, whose will to live had ebbed away. '*... somebody's husband, somebody's son*' is a book to break your heart. □

INDUSTRY
John Rentoul

Drug dealing

Corporate Crime in the Pharmaceutical Industry
JOHN BRAITHWAITE *Routledge* £25
Roche versus Adams
STANLEY ADAMS *Cape* £5.85

The only commentator who thinks that government approval for the marketing of new drugs is not necessary is Milton Friedman. He believes, in his monetarist wisdom, that market forces can weed out dangerous drugs, and has suggested that the US Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) be abolished.

John Braithwaite's ghastly catalogue of suffering for which the drugs multinationals are culpable emphasises just how morally repugnant such an argument is. Since the ultimate nightmare-fulfilment of Thalidomide's deformed births, drug scandals have almost ceased to shock, but Braithwaite constantly surprises with further instances of dishonesty.

Two minor examples: a letter to Merck (the second biggest drugs company in the world) from a doctor testing a new drug:

> These adverse symptoms do not alarm me or indicate any organic damage but I am afraid they will offer some practical problems in marketing this drug. Needless to say, I am very grateful for all of your kind efforts in regard to my trip to Japan.

And this is Dr Chester Southam explaining why he was reluctant to undergo what he described as essentially 'no risk' test injections for his own cancer research: 'Let's face it, there are relatively few skilled cancer researchers, and it seemed stupid to take even the little risk.'

To describe the activities of the drugs multinationals as 'criminal', however, is to underestimate, by implication, the extent to which such behaviour is structural rather than the result of individual irresponsibility.

The story of Stanley Adams is a chilling case study in the crushing of an individual by a typically faceless drugs company, Swiss-based Hoffman-La Roche. It is also a clear example of how Friedman's market principles actually operate in practice. Adams reported his employer to the EEC for strengthening and abusing its monopolistic position in the vitamins market. Swiss law and the Swiss state are so closely identified with the interests of resident multinationals that Adams was thrown into prison and his life ruined. Adams's story beings home the ordinariness of the moral dilemma of working in the drugs industry, a choice between a shiny new Jaguar 4.2 and a clear conscience.

Because of their hatred of monopolies and bureaucracies (including multinational corporations), the libertarian Right has flocked to Adams's cause. Michael Ivens, director of Aims of Industry, has launched the Stanley Adams Appeal Committee, saying: 'We believe that free enterprise must be responsible as well as enterprising.' And Friedman would no doubt argue that it is the *imperfections* of the free market that cause malpractices in the drugs industry.

But the free-marketeers fail to recognise the role of government in making the rules under which the market operates. The excessive profitability of the drugs industry is facilitated by patent laws which give companies initial monopolies on drugs they develop, by price-fixing and by international tax avoidance and transfer pricing.

Braithwaite argues that in many Third World countries multinationals' head offices are more effective police forces for local subsidiaries than governments. He advocates government regulation, the best example of which is the FDA, providing a framework for companies to improve their internal controls.

He doesn't devote enough space to the Left's stock response — nationalisation — saying it is the quality of institutional rules that matters, not the nature of the institution or its motives. But if we look at the way some British nationalised industries (such as British Nuclear Fuels and the Central Electricity Generating Board) operate, it seems he has a point.

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Voices 1870-1914

PETER VANSITTART *Cape* £9.95

Anyone who believes the period between the Franco-Prussian war and the First World War was one of unbroken peace and uninterrupted progress will be quickly disabused by Peter Vansittart's second historical anthology, *Voices 1870-1914*. As he remarks in his introduction, it was 'less a golden age than an age of gold', characterised by a ferocious pursuit of profit and power. His summary of the period is a brisk catalogue of atrocities, starting with the siege of Paris and its aftermath, and taking in colonial wars, tribal massacres and a steady sprinkling of assassinations and reprisals, the whole being underpinned by reminders of the increasingly pervasive militarism which found its natural culmination in the Western Front.

The anthology itself, drawn from the writings of statesmen, philosophers, novelists, poets and journalists, is remarkable for the strain of fevered lunacy that runs through it. It is as though there was a general conspiracy to find a moral quality in bloodshed. For the Germans, war became 'the highest expression of culture', Nietzsche claiming that 'a good war justifies any cause'. Engels relished 'a pitiless fight to the death against Slavs . . . a war of extermination . . .' Lenin asserted, 'we need the real, nation-wide terror which reinvigorates the country'. For the anarchist, 'the explosion of my bomb is . . . the cry of an entire class', while for the imperialist, racial superiority over 'the native' sanctioned any outrage. Practically the only people who didn't envisage wading to their goal through rivers of blood were the suffragettes.

The voices of women such as Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf come across as the cooling breath of sanity, and, as an antidote to the furious inhumanity of the male ideologues, there is Rosa Luxemburg's insistence that 'a man hurrying to achieve some great deed and who knocks down a child out of insensitive carelessness commits a crime'.

If one is to pick a symbol for the age, it has to be the Titanic. The greatest ship ever built, presumed indestructible ('God himself couldn't sink this ship'), summed up all the arrogance and recklessness of the period. It had everything on board — except sufficient lifeboats and binoculars for the crow's nest. It was still putting on steam when it hit the iceberg, and the man responsible for the lack of lifeboats scrambled to safety ahead of the 1,800 who died.

Simon Rae

The Knight, the Lady and the Priest

GEORGES DUBY trans. BARBARA BRAY *Allen Lane* £14.95

Using Church documents and biographies, Professor Duby examines the attitudes to marriage prevalent in the 11th and 12th centuries, when marriage evolved from an entirely secular matter to a sacrament of the Church, although a lesser one than the spiritual sacraments like baptism and the Eucharist. The worst thing about marriage, according to both heretics and the rigorists of the Church, was the possibility of physical pleasure. If you could manage to procreate but not enjoy it, it was almost as good as virginity.

Duby's thesis is that there were two 'matrimonial moralities' — one imposed by the Church and one practised by the nobility. These eventually merged into a recognisable ancestor of modern matrimony. Duby sees the institution of marriage as the key to the organisation of aristocratic society. Only the eldest sons were allowed to marry, so as not to divide the family inheritance. Younger sons were left to seek adventure in tournaments or Crusades or to go into the Church; in any case official celibacy was their lot. The daughters were married off as a means of making alliances with other powerful families and combining various strains of 'noble blood'. It was the exclusive right of the head of a family to dispose of its women. The parties to the marriage were supposed to agree to the arrangement, but romantic preference played a negligible part. Professor Duby interestingly describes the terror with which men regarded women, evident in both Church doctrine and social conventions. Women were thought sexually insatiable, naturally lustful and therefore a constant threat to family honour. It was not safe to leave them without some man — father, husband, brother or nephew — to guide them.

Professor Duby is especially good at presenting evidence extracted judiciously from documents, homilies and memoirs of the time. He warns against misreading the evidence, coming as we do as time-foreigners to this strange country of the past. It is refreshing to find a historian who is always conscious that we simply do not know what or how people thought 1,000 years ago. They were not necessarily 'just like us'. We know hardly anything about women of that period and next to nothing about anyone outside the Church or the aristocracy.

Duby explains the complicated machinations of the mediaeval churchman and the paterfamilias in a scholarly but lively style. Barbara Bray's translation is smooth and readable.

Sarah Lawson

The Ostrich Position: Sex, Schooling and Mystification

CAROL LEE *Writers & Readers* £5.95 & £3.95

Adults bury their heads ostrich-like in the sand when they talk about sex with their children and teenagers end up uninformed. Worse still, they pick up all sorts of odd ideas: some think sexual intercourse takes place through your navel and others that you insert the pill in the vagina. Carol Lee's job as a teacher of sex education is not helped when some Health Education Panels ban the use of the word 'vagina', deeming it 'unacceptable'.

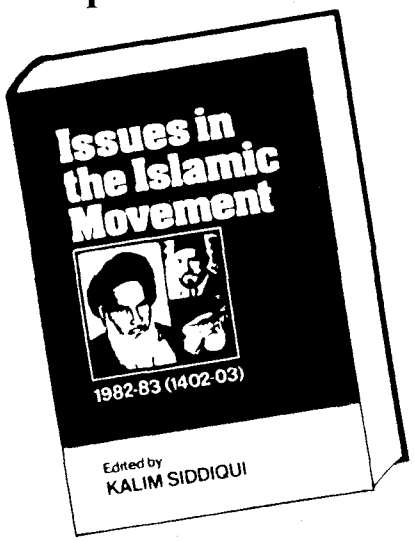
This book describes Ms Lee's classroom encounters with today's teenagers who, contrary to popular belief, know painfully little about sex. She is not helped by the fact that as a nation we do not have a comfortable language with which to discuss the subject. This is why most parents find it impossible to talk with their children and why we need sex education in schools. Although some knowledge does filter through the generations. Many boys learn from their fathers that 'sex is about doing, not feeling'.

The book accuses much sex education material used in schools of distorting by omission. It is hardly surprising that girls and boys come out confused when a wall chart depicting a naked female body is drawn with 'no hair, except on the top of her head, no nipples and breasts which do not obey the law of gravity'. Further contradictions were revealed to Ms Lee during her time as an 'agony aunt' on a daily newspaper. Her brushes with Fleet Street's news values show up all the inconsistencies of a self-censorship which forbids the use of the word 'masturbation' in the columns of a paper which makes its money reporting 'sex orgies'. After numerous battles with her editor the column was dropped.

Carol Lee's ingenious strategies for winning her pupils' attention and respect make this a very readable book and highly recommendable for *all* teachers faced with a hostile classroom. Her final plea is for more properly devised programmes of sex education under the supervision of people who care about educating the young, not mere technicians. Her underlying aim is to develop a curriculum which embraces the whole of human relationships.

Helen Baehr

Try the tripolar world



We now live in a tripolar world. Islam, the new pole in world politics, does not accept the rules of the bipolar system as they emerged from the Cold War. And Islam is no Marxism, as familiar as the British Museum.

Islam's view of the world is articulated by a new generation of writers. Their doyen is Dr. Kalim Siddiqui, director of the Muslim Institute, London.

For the third year he has edited an anthology from Islam's 'fringe' media in the west. In his original introduction he delineates the conceptual divide between the politics of Islam and non-Islam. The effect is exhilarating.

There are 128 articles, glossary and an extensive index; pp 432

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HISTORY OF RACISM
Ben Okri

Out of silence

Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain
PETER FRYER *Pluto* £9.95

Queen Elizabeth the First, in 1596, was the first British ruler to attempt repatriation of blacks. This was some 30 years after she loaned the first English slave trader, John Hawkins, a slave-hunting vessel called Jesus of Lubeck for his second slave-hunting voyage. By the time of her attempted deportation of black people, African slaves had been brought back to Britain for use as household servants, as sexual conveniences and as court entertainers. Nearly 70 years later, in 1663, an English company, the Royal Adventurers into Africa, obtained a charter specifying obtaining slaves as their objective. The Royal Adventurers included the King and Queen, the Queen Mother, a Prince, three Dukes and others. The slave trade had begun in earnest; and mostly because of sugar. From 1663 to 1775 sugar consumption in England went up twentyfold. The English poet William Cowper, writing about the agony of slaves in his poem 'Pity for Poor Africans', expresses the relationship between sugar and slavery in these last lines: 'I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,/ For how could we do without sugar and rum?' These are just a few facts from Peter Fryer's exhaustively researched book.

It is a massive and admirable but not definitive work. It chronicles 2,000 years of black presence in Britain from the time the Roman Imperial Army occupied the southern part of Britain to the present. The effect of the great mass of facts and events documented is not so much to persuade as to fill the crevices of generalisation, to expose the unquestioned inheritance of tireless racial prejudice and to make it clear that racism was the religion of greed. And now it has become the religion of ignorance.

Racism was immensely profitable. It helped to build at least three cities: Bristol, Liverpool and London. From 1630 to the beginning of the 19th century British slave merchants made 12 million pounds on two and a half million African slaves. The slave trade fuelled the Industrial Revolution.

One of the most useful things about the book is its refusal to paper over the basis of racism and race prejudice. Peter Fryer manages to trace them to their beginnings—the mythology of race which hardened with the slave trade; the contribution of the early travellers' tales about Africa and Africans (to which V.S. Naipaul's new book with its transmitted gossip of a refrigerated container rumoured to contain several heads exported to Nigeria from Abijan, is the latest contribution).

In the long building of the monument of racism many illustrious figures made their contributions: Francis Bacon, mystic and Rosicrucian, drew on unquestioned race prejudice in one of his essays; John Locke, who had some investment in the Royal African Company, drew on inherited prejudice to make the argument that a 'Negro is not a man'; David Hume, the great empiricist, found it difficult to accept even the possibility of a black person being one of 'parts and learning'. And the Bible was called on to help a great deal. Plantocracy racism was an ideology that sustained both greed and great cruelty, and pseudo-scientific racism, a muddle of phrenology, craniology, social-Darwinism and anthropology, served as the living gospel of racism with a scientific veneer. It is strange to discover now that the champions of pseudo-scientific racism were all quacks. It is stranger to realise that their assumptions enabled the murder and extermination of blacks to become a necessity for the dominion of 'the higher race'. When slavery was ended, racism merely changed form.

All through this, black people who were brought to Britain as slaves, as servants and as status symbols lived poor, suffered relentlessly, ran away from their masters and organised. *Staying Power* makes it clear that black people did not suffer or fight alone: in the 19th century the demonology of race also served as a frame for the demonology of class; the sub-humanity of blacks also became the sub-humanity of the working class. The book also makes it clear that black people (including the radicals William Davidson, Robert Wedderburn and Cuffay) did not accept their dehumanisation like the morons they were supposed to be. It would be very easy to throw up names of black people who made genuine contributions to British society and culture. It would be easy to say that Samuel Coleridge-Taylor made a valuable contribution to British concert music, and is now conveniently forgotten; that Mary Seacole (whose autobiography was reviewed in the NS on 6 April) was once ranked with Florence Nightingale. It may not be so easy, however, to say that the 'rivers of blood' Enoch Powell evoked so feverishly have been flowing for a long time: in Liverpool, in 1919, mobs set upon 'every negro they could find', burning them in their houses in a racial hysteria which was to break out again and again this century.

Staying Power, with its facts rescued from silence, makes it necessary to re-think and thoroughly question all kinds of assumptions, to penetrate establishment conspiracy and to look behind the great walls of silence and see the lies which suppurate beyond. The facts astonish but it is the long silence about the facts which truly frightens. The history of black people in Britain, rendered doubly invisible by pig-headed stupidity and brazen historical opportunism, has been one long journey through the deserts of the Empire's soul. The staying power of the title can also stand for the staying power of racism, which, though still as mindless as it's always been, adapts and seizes on ridiculous notions and easy categories and indulges in wilful blindness (even with the illustrious minds of today) in its long survival.

It must be said that the book is thin on Asians: they deserve a full study; and the umbrella over Asian and African does not work so well. The book in that sense is lopsided. It can also be said that *Staying Power*, for all its invaluable research and documentation and honesty, is a service of conscience. □

FICTION
Marion Glastonbury

Intimate motifs

The Unbearable Lightness of Being
MILAN KUNDERA *Faber* £9.50
The Glad Eye and other stories
STAN BARSTOW *Michael Joseph* £8.95
The Reach and other stories
eds. LILIAN MOHIN & SHEILA SHULMAN
Onlywomen £2.95

This week, Milan Kundera has had as many Western journalists sitting at his feet in Paris as were formerly drawn to the shrine of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa. In consequence, the facts of his career, which began in Brno in 1929, have been well publicised: early membership of the Communist Party; expulsion; reinstatement; acclaim during 'the Prague Spring' for his satirical first novel *The Joke*; dismissal from his post at the National Film School following the Russian invasion; continued residence in Czechoslovakia during the 'normalization' period, despite the suppression of his books; finally, in 1975, his acceptance of a professorship at the University of Rennes.

In **The Unbearable Lightness of Being**, he defines his characters as 'my own unrealized possibilities... Each one has crossed a border that I myself have circumvented'. In a time of peculiarly fateful choices—where, how and with whom to live?—he laments the inescapable singularity of any course of action. Unscripted, unrehearsed, unrepeatable, life is an improvisation from which it is always too late to learn.

But fiction, like film, permits unlimited replays and shifts of perspective—and the intersecting paths of Kundera's four protagonists ingeniously reveal recurrent episodes, dreams and images in different minds.

Franz, the Swiss philosopher, is for ever at cross purposes with his adored painter, the exiled Sabine, so their romance is conveyed through a glossary of misunderstood words. Incompatible habits of thought, opposing tastes and divergent responses are subtly traced to the contrasting predispositions of their separate pasts. Tomas the brain surgeon, perplexed by the incongruity of his marriage to a waitress turned photographer, tries to distinguish the essential elements of his destiny —*'Es muss sein'*—from the fortuitous. In vain. His impression that Tereza has drifted towards him like an abandoned infant borne on the stream reminds him of other such rescues, in myth and legend. This prompts a reference to Oedipus in a letter to the Press on the subject of national guilt, which costs him his job.

Questions of accident and design, intention and outcome, are the more vexed because private conversations may be officially recorded and a casual liaison turn out to have been engineered by the police. Kundera specialises in intricate patterns of causation and ironic

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reverses of fortune.

Lest the reader should consider these paradoxes schematic, the author meets the charge with a dextrous pre-emptive thrust. Art has no monopoly on symmetry, he argues, for human lives are composed like music. They take shape according to the significance we assign to random objects and encounters in our formative years. These intimate motifs can be shared in the opening sequences, continuing to resonate thereafter. Hence the enduring fascination for Tomas of Sabine's bowler hat, the secret token of her desire for humiliation.

The example is less felicitous than the idea, which neatly transposes into literature the autobiographical tradition developed in music by Smetana and Janacek. 'The laws of beauty,' elegiacally invoked here, belong chiefly to men like Tomas and Franz, who recoil from the coarse and the commonplace and whose intellectual pre-eminence is shown by their swift shedding of domestic encumbrances. 'In practically no time, Tomas managed to rid himself of wife, son, mother and father.' Compassion, even curiosity, are notably absent from the portrayal of these nameless extras: the former spouse, the bespectacled girlfriend, the bloated matron in the public baths. By the time Tomas and Tereza take up farming, only animals—a cow, a pig, a dog—seem worthy of attention and attachment. A prophet much honoured outside his own country, Kundera scorns the Grand March of collective hopes and, equally marketably, endows his hero (of course) with sexual omnipotence.

Born within a year of Kundera, Stan Barstow is a writer of solidly democratic sympathies, with a plain, spare, demotic tone to match. The ten stories in his new collection **The Glad Eye** have the mundane poignancy of the small ads in a newsagent's window, where pleas for help and promises of excitement mingle with the sale price of second-hand goods. A headmaster's wife gets caught shoplifting; an ailing pensioner fails to recognise, in an obliging stranger, the discharged prisoner who once appeared before her in the magistrates' court. Sudden loneliness; ebbing strength; dubious marital bargains: it takes authentic craftsmanship to make these glum themes satisfying. I would have preferred less motoring, though. Even a new production of *Don Carlos* is described as 'not yet run in'.

Its editors claim that **The Reach** is the first lesbian feminist fiction anthology in Britain; its title is taken from Anna Wilson's coinage, meaning 'a guest and potential recruit' to a Utopian community of women. Biographical notes on the contributors suggest a wider range of experience than is apparent in the stories, which, for young and old, students and teachers, loners and partners alike, stress their common denominator: the darkness of the closet and the coming of light. The need to make lesbianism visible and to spell out what no one dared explain to Queen Victoria is expressed by Caroline Natzler, when, in response to a friend's challenge, she asserts that she could 'go against society'—'I did not know that "society" might mean my mother and my father, my friends, the sanity and sociability I had so recently achieved, the progress of my work, the final justifying of life in reproduction and parenthood; easy intercourse and recognition in all the patterns of daily life.' □

ART

John Spurling

Travelling light

Indira Gandhi and Nehru: detail from Feliks Topolski's 'Father and Daughter'

Memoir of the Century
Hungerford Railway Arches, London SE1
Rococo: Art and Design in Hogarth's England
V & A

Feliks Topolski's **Memoir of the Century** consists of some 600 feet of murals and screens crammed maze-like into a space below the approach to Hungerford Bridge and recording his personal brush with history: 'the facts of my life, spread over the globe and woven into the history of this century, were pinned down by me in drawing on the spot from the very early days.'

The *Memoir* begins in Poland, where Topolski was born at about the same time as his actor father was imprisoned after the abortive revolution of 1905. The father emerged to play Napoleon in Shaw's *Man of Destiny*, the son went on to become an art student, emigrating in the '30s — via Hitler's Germany, Franco's Spain, Mussolini's Italy and Sacha Guitry's Paris — to England, where he fell in with such bohemian luminaries as Augustus John, Cyril Connolly and Graham Greene. In the Second War he travelled again: to Egypt, Burma, China, India, Italy and finally Germany. In 1946 he attended the Nuremberg trial and drew the Nazi war criminals in the dock. His horizons since then have been limited less by geography — he has continued to travel extensively — than by his adopted nationality and his status as a tourist. The *Memoir* alludes occasionally to unrest in the Third World — though not, apparently, to that in Eastern Europe — but dwells mainly on Commonwealth and Coronation, a Chicago Presidential Convention, hippies and various international celebrities (including the Black Panthers, Stephen Ward, Michael X, Gulkbenkian, Russell and Nehru).

The result is a splendidly ambitious concept whose patchy realisation is proportionally

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disappointing. It is, to quote from a play which, long before the unveiling of Topolski's *Memoir,* envisaged a similar mural dealing with the life of Che Guevara: 'so very much missing at so many crucial points'. The disappointment can be analysed in terms provided by Milan Kundera's new novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being.* Kundera suggests that things that don't recur have insufficient weight, that the inconsequential, improvised lives we lead are like a rehearsal or a sketch, but then corrects himself:

> No, 'sketch' is not quite the word, because a sketch is an outline of something, the groundwork for a picture, whereas the sketch that is our life is a sketch for nothing, an outline with no picture.

On the other hand, the idea of our lives being constantly repeated 'is a terrifying prospect. In the world of eternal return the weight of unbearable responsibility lies heavy on every move we make'.

A work such as Topolski's *Memoir* ought to reconcile these opposites, ought to lend to the light, instantaneous 'sketch for nothing' the weight of hindsight and retrieval, both the artist's and history's reshaping of the personal and collective past. In fact Topolski is most at home with caricature, with the rapid, grotesque sketch. Bernard Shaw, Augustus John, Sacha Guitry, the dead Mussolini upside down, a pair of Red Indian-style hippies, a Russian Marshal on parade in front of the Kremlin, Queen Mary and George V at their 1935 Jubilee (like a pair of profile mugs, she huge and plain, he small and fussily decorated): all these and many other moments and faces pop out of the walls like little shocks and *frissons* in a fairground ghost tunnel. Occasionally the experience is stronger: the mauve and white heads of the old men accused at Nuremberg float as in a nightmare over a soothing green ground.

But the weight is mostly absent. The passages of colour, the background and structural matrix for these individual drawings are confused and inert, conveying neither history nor personal feeling. The large kinetic wheel representing the United Nations, the drawings of dead German snipers in an angular Henry Moore-ish manner, the wall of red and black abstract shapes standing for the Blitz lack energy or conviction, as though Topolski had almost contemptuously borrowed a style, without any notion of its original content or purpose. In the same way history as revisited experience — the weight which might anchor those faces to their context and lend them something more than anecdotal interest — seems through Topolski's eyes largely meaningless, a mere filling-in of dead space, somebody else's superficial formula.

Rococo was the 18th century's light answer to the heaviness of 17th century Baroque. It was a French style which quickly caught on in England, where the steadily increasing prosperity of the landed and commercial classes created an eager market for expensive and ostentatious fripperies. It did not produce any painters here to rival Watteau or Boucher. Hogarth was a leading figure in the group of artists and craftsmen who were associated with the style in England, but his English solidity never succumbed in practice to the serpentine 'line of beauty' which he embraced in theory; any more than the dignity of English Palladian architecture was much affected by the rococo goings-on within its walls.

The V & A, sponsored by Trusthouse Forte, has mounted a magnificent display of objects — furniture, silver, porcelain, textiles, even weapons — whose energetic asymmetry and inventive wit suggest a society quite unaware of its destiny as the premier moral and commercial power in the next century, even though it was engaged in a fierce struggle for supremacy with France for part of this rococo period. The catalogue (£4.95) by several hands is uncommonly readable for such a scholarly and specialised occasion. The star of the show is a French immigrant, the sculptor Louis François Roubiliac. His marble drapery may be authentically rococo; the sensitivity of his faces (especially that of Alexander Pope) combines the ephemeral lightness of an individual person and a fashionable style with the lasting weight of a society and a human consciousness retrieved by art.

FILMS
John Coleman

Mare's nest

Gregorio Cortez (15)
Electric Screen
Mr Mum (PG)
ABC, Shaftesbury Avenue; etc.
Variety (18)
Screen on the Green
Where the Buffalo Roam (18)
ICA; Classic, Chelsea
The Wizard of Oz (U)
Plaza

Devotees of the American Western have been on short commons for a while now, maybe because that frontier-stretching era of cinematic fruitfulness ran into something more diseased, murky and contemporary with the Vietnam experience, when even emblematic John Wayne couldn't transplant his moral-cowboy persona from *Stagecoach* to *The Green Berets* and make it stick. Zapping the Cong was manifestly a less attractive deal than cheating the Indian. The stench of napalm replaced the rough male kiss of bullets. So a cordial welcome to Robert M. Young's **Gregorio Cortez,** which proves a relieving shot in the arm of a palsied, disfavoured genre, drawing its narrative thrust from a popular Mexican *corrido* or folk-ballad woven around one of the most famous man-hunts in Texas history.

On 12 June, 1901, there was a muddled exchange of gunfire between a trigger-happy white lawman and a young Mexican farmer, the whole mess arising from an interpreter's inability to distinguish between 'horse' and 'mare'. At the end of it, a sheriff lay dead, poor Cortez's brother lay badly wounded and Gregorio himself went zigzagging on the back of a horse, eluding an army of Texas Rangers, local posses and generally inflamed people riding saddle and railroad after him for 11 days.

A gleaming, steam-swaddled black engine stares at us from the start, setting the tone of a period when physical and psychological borders were being breached, a time of trains, telephones, newspaper rewards and inter-racial disquiet. This is where Young, a director with a background in socially-conscientious documentaries, shows his strengths. For all the turn-of-the-century machinery, humanity lagged sadly behind, behaving to set patterns, mounting a lynch-mob outside the jail when Cortez is finally behind bars, treating his family like dung. Young's deliberately low-key approach to this material — which can, nevertheless, encompass trad Western panoramas (lost figures in barren landscape) — has its hazards. He goes for a *Rashomon*-style ambiguity that leaves a concerned journalist in awfully reduced film circumstances; his good Gregorio (Edward James Olmos) is latterly encouraged to ham a lachrymose innocence; the jigsaw structure has its raw edges and maybe too much lamp-lit chiaroscuro for easy assembly, perhaps even too many pieces. Yet it would be folly not to recognise the decency and intelligent dignity on display, not least in a splendidly because haltingly conducted court-room sequence, where Barry Corbin speaks with pained and rough anguish as Gregorio's defending counsel. This is a note Mr Young might have struck more often.

Stan Dragoti's **Mr Mum** — its title gently adjusted for thick UK consumers from the US 'Mr Mom' — belongs, if it has houseroom anywhere, at some other end of a spectrum. This is a soap-opera pretending to send up a TV genre: soap-operas. Congenial, open-faced Michael Keaton, excellent as the fast-talking

Blake Morrison

Ice

In a white room with chessboard lino
Beatrice interrogates a tumbler of ice.
Wait, wait, she has it clear at last:
The skylit boxroom where her husband
Meets another to become less squarely himself.
She can see them stand, filmed in sweat
And with sheets around their navels, like
The brothers Alberti, 'cramponed breast to breast.'

I was there till eight at the Institute,
If you had only called. Miss Talleyrand,
The one who sees hell as a vagina,
Had been led by she-wolves through a kingdom
Of ice. It was a classic quest-myth —
Mazes, mages, tricks with double mirrors —
And when they reached the throne there was mother
Chained to the father and gnawing out his eyes.

But she will not believe this, having heard it
All before. His trembling thumbs press down
On the ice-tray until it gives like a neck-cord
With two little puffs of breath. Poor phantoms,
Held there in prisms of despondency,
I'm here to see you make it up again,
To warm to your theme-song of treachery
And suspicion, so different from my own.

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ideas-man in *Night Shift*, his screen debut, here does his engaging most to rescue a predictable script by John Hughes from our yawn-along divinations of what comes next. As a fired Detroit automobile executive, this Jack is left minding the family (which includes a vacuum cleaner called 'Jaws', with its appropriate musical menace as it advances on the household) while delicious, wasted Teri Garr as his missus goes out to thrive as an advertising whiz, rescuing a tuna-fish account and garnering her boss's unwelcome lust. The puerile peripeteia that ensues — please, no sex, we're skittish — has space for a few funny one-liners (who hasn't?) but cunningly contrives to make the minimum out of its reversal of gender-roles. Best running-gag comes in Keaton's getting hooked on mock-*Dynasty* soaps and knowingly talking back to the telly, mad-monologue spasms many will acknowledge.

From the self-admiring fringe of American independent cinema — the fringe that should have a 'sorry' on top instead — juts Bette Gordon's bewildering **Variety** which, according to an interview in the BFI's current *Monthly Film Bulletin*, 'comes out of the fact that the whole sexuality question is very big in New York at the moment'. Ms Gordon goes on to expand this fascinating insight. Really, the *MFB* is required reading these days for first-jargoniters — never a month goes by that it fails to 'foreground' something meritless. Back at the Gordon movie, for 15 minutes or so we seem to be in for a provocative entertainment. Christine, an unemployed girl in the Big Apple, coolly takes on a slot as ticket-seller at a porno movie-house; grows warmer as she puffs ciggies during her break in the foyer, listening to the faked orgasmic grunts; starts haunting dirty-book-shops and following an improbably suave regular at the porn-place around as he appears to be involved in some fish-market Mafia naughtiness that her straight boyfriend, a journalist, is investigating. I am quite as confused as you, I trust, are by now, and what set off as a boldish look at a woman's reactions to pornography slides away, in equal confusion, into a botched thriller. Kathy Acker, a name-about-town, wrote the dreadful dialogue.

A quack journalist, Hunter S. Thompson, of quick repute, is the druggy, drunken presence behind, and enshrined in, Art Linson's **Where the Buffalo Roam**, an uncomical pursuit of his thuggish excursions into American politics and polemics. Only knee-jerk Sunday anarchists could relish this waste of bland Bill Murray and Peter Boyle as his drop-out lawyer pal, Lazlo. Everyone, including us, has a bad trip, for all the gall with which this piece affects to confront such phenomena as Late Hippies and blighted politicians. Even Nixon, encountered in a men's room by Murray/Thompson (surely a heaven-sent *Rolling Stone* event, if it happened), goes for nothing, but not satirically. Piss-and-wind: a pity. Go, rather, to the pure plangency of juvenile Judy Garland, hitting the yellow brick road in that great, bedevilled and bedizened musical fantasy, **The Wizard of Oz**, so rightly revived. Apart from the sheer fun of it, there are enough metaphors in this to stuff a film faculty with PhDs. □

JAZZ
Charles Fox

Two aristocats

PICKING A SINGLE work to exemplify an artist's output is always dangerous, the kind of whittling down that results in Golding being equated with *Lord of the Flies* and Osborne frozen for ever looking back angrily. Yet there is some usefulness in pointing out that 'Mood Indigo' and 'One O'Clock Jump' do reflect something of the respective achievements of Duke Ellington, who died ten years ago this Thursday, and Count Basie, five years Ellington's junior, whose death at the end of April is still recent enough to hurt. Both pieces are blues, but very different. 'Mood Indigo' deploys the New Orleans formula of trumpet, trombone and clarinet to concoct a wistful tone-poem. 'One O'Clock Jump' is optimistic, jaunty solos and cock-a-hoop riffing joined to the most perfect of all rhythm sections.

The differences also reveal something about the two men. It was Colin MacInnes, in one of his sunnier moments, who confided to the present writer that Duke Ellington reminded him of a mixture of an African aristocrat and a South American cad. Certainly Ellington was

billboard

Poetry

A FEW PLACES remain for September in Morley College Writing Group. Enquiries 01-928 8501.

Theatre

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HAMPSTEAD BOOK FAIR (Secondhand & Antiquarian) Sun. 27 May, 11am-5pm. Old Town Hall, Haverstock Hill NW3 (opp. Belsize Park tube).

Galleries

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equivocal, oscillating between hedonism and piety, reading his Bible every day, in later years devoting much composing time to his series of Sacred Concerts. His autobiography, *Music is my Mistress*, rivalled John Cowper Powys's in the extent to which it omitted information about both marriages and informal liaisons. But the womanising and the gargantuan snacks were balanced by a dedication to the work ethic that found Ellington composing in between concerts, in his hotel rooms, even on his death bed. Basie was chummier and less complicated, inclined to be ribald, fond of playing cards with his sidemen (Duke did that too, even elevating the pastime with an aesthetic dictum: 'Nobody can compose unless he knows how the guys who'll play the piece play poker'). And where Basie rode up front in his band-coach, Ellington sat alongside Harry Carney, his longest-serving colleague, in Carney's Imperial car, folding and unfolding maps, acting as navigator.

Travelling took up a sizeable chunk of both Basie's and Ellington's lives. In the 1930s and 1940s white bands worked all the lengthy residencies at big hotels. Black bands, by contrast, spent much more time on the road, zigzagging across America from one one-night stand to another. Even when things had turned out more prosperously for Basie, his band devoted a single month of 1969 to journeying from Florida to North Carolina, on to Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, California and Arizona, then back to Kansas before doing the rounds of Iowa, Illinois, New York and Connecticut. In the autumn of 1973, when Ellington was 72 and already dying of cancer, the band played concerts on consecutive evenings in Brussels and Addis Ababa. The sheer stoicism should never be underestimated. In earlier years it also involved finding places at which to eat and stay in the segregated South. No doubt Ellington evolved his gracious manner as a way of coping with rebuffs as well as plaudits. 'The kids in the band would like you to know that we all love you madly' could sound either benign or ironic.

The famous phrase is not to be heard, oddly enough, on a recently issued 2-LP album, *Duke Ellington: All Star Road Band* (Doctor Jazz ASLD 850), recorded at a dance in Carroltown, Pennsylvania, in the summer of 1957. This was perhaps the last of Ellington's great bands. Soon the orchestra would turn into a museum, departed heroes being replaced by imitators rather than by musicians who might have jolted Ellington into writing freshly for their talents. Meanwhile, the trumpet section included Ray Nance (he plays ravishingly behind the beat in 'Take the "A" Train'), the elegantly acrobatic Clark Terry and the underrated Shorty Baker (he even makes something out of 'Star Dust', a difficult tune on which to improvise). Johnny Hodges takes feathery but passionate alto solos, no doubt glancing at his wristwatch in mid-swoop, while, at the bottom of the saxophones, like a keel beneath a ship, lay Harry Carney's rich baritone. The emphasis was on solos, yet the orchestral legacy of earlier periods comes across in a section from 'Such Sweet Thunder'. Ellington himself, somewhat despised as a soloist before the war (in those days a tinge of ragtime was a recipe for sounding old-fashioned), takes chorus after chorus on a slightly dishevelled piano.

Basie's piano playing, of course, acted as a trademark for his concern with dynamics, those sudden contrasts between single notes ('The Count goes bink bink', wrote Henry Miller in *The Colossus of Maroussi*) and the full-throated roar of the band. It can all be sampled in *Swingin' The Blues* (Affinity AFS 1010), 16 tracks recorded between 1937 and 1939 by the band that Basie took from Kansas City to New York. It swung like a small group. The ensemble even seemed to exist to egg on the soloists, unlike the more upholstered versions that took over in the 1950s. Lester Young ambles as if he were indicating harmonies rather than being hedged in by them, Hershal Evans uses a fat Texan tone, Dickie Wells and Buck Clayton chip in with unique ideas, all of them afloat over piano, guitar, bass and drums playing four even beats to the bar, giving a practical definition of what swing was to mean.

It is impossible to regard either Ellington or Basie in isolation from their musicians, the players they rubbed elbows with day after day, whose sounds and styles were part of their music's fabric. Sometimes that collaboration rankled, as when Ellington's clarinettist, Barney Bigard, grumbled that it was really he who had written 'Mood Indigo'. Bigard may indeed have devised the theme (after all, he is listed as joint composer), yet what makes the piece unforgettable is the orchestration, the fragile voicing. Ellington, in fact, provided an overall context for his sidemen, enhancing their talents, just as Basie did — in earlier times, anyway — by the soloists he picked and the sort of freedom he offered them. Duke always resisted the more earnest kind of critical chatter: 'It stinks up the place,' he used to say. Basie, of course, could not be bothered anyway. So on this occasion it might be simplest to settle for another of Ellington's pet phrases and to describe both men as 'beyond category'. □

TELEVISION
Hugo Williams

Leaving home

A CHILD'S bicycle lying abandoned in the road. From its first image, **Runners** (C4) reminded us of the case of Ginette Tate and of the dedicated vigil of her parents who found it impossible to eat before nightfall lest she came back hungry during the day.

Mr Tate was on breakfast TV this week to discuss his 'Support' organisation for parents of lost children. I could find no mention of his name in the very long credit list of *Runners*, despite an oblique reference to him in the character Wilkins, who advises the bereaved Linsays to go out and look for their Rachel. Wilkins's 'Support' meeting is a satirical set piece in a disused swimming pool — 'The Deep End is designated a Play Area' — where abandoned fathers and mothers slowly dance in the echoing, empty pool. His office is bedaubed with centrefolds from the previous incumbents, coaxing a voluptuous element from the bereavement and introduction of strangers Jane Asher and James Fox.

This was a Stephen Poliakoff concoction, so predictability flourished. They go to London and bump into each other in the Grosvenor Hotel. Sub-plot ahoy! He washes her face as if she was his little girl. She sleeps in his room without prejudice. Their intimacy is non-sexual until Rachel turns up and her father's joy turns to a kind of conceptual lust in Poliakoff's mind. Asher only just manages to shut the door with her free hand before a token contractual copulation is accomplished between stars.

These were not the only expectations crudely ticked off. Fox is convinced his daughter is caught up in teenage drug-crime-sex and/or religion, so it is Poliakoff's reflex to have her leading a fairly ordinary life with a job handing out mini-cab leaflets. If she was such a good little citizen, how come she didn't ring up for two years? And what prompted her to leave in the first place? A series of tensely directed encounters in different parts of London fails to explain the tragedy behind a child's unnatural obsession with work. Instead, I believe a political hobby horse was being ridden: 'It was much easier for us when we were kids, I'd hate to be growing up now,' says Asher.

London too, as in most Poliakoff, is the easy sociological scapegoat: 'At least I saw the city the way you saw it. It's falling to bits, isn't it?' Falling to bits? Is this another concept? At bottom this quickie was barely more than cheque-book journalism with acting. You take a winning headline for a peg and you smack a story round it like so many overcoats on a winter evening. In this case the overcoats were modelled convincingly enough but, as soon as night fell, you realised it had been the personalities of the actors not the characters that had filled the coats. And Charles Sturridge should be made to write out a hundred times: 'I must not have actors crushing avocados into the pillars of hotel lobbies in order to symbolise social and sexual frustration.'

'I don't like to consider him my father because from six to twelve he raped me,' said Kitty in **The American Documentary: Runaways, Where are they Now?** (ITV). Her other line was 'I ain't going home'. Runaway Tony has a patch on 53rd at 3rd. 'You have a choice,' he said reasonably. 'Either you sell your tail to some John for couple hundred bucks, or else you rip someone off.' Tony seemed happy that these alternatives were easily distinguishable. Six months later he had lost his patch and his flat and the film was taking his disappearance as an opportunity to delineate the risks of his occupation. A Dean Carol killed 27 such rent-boys. Their lime-soaked bodies were discovered by accident.

The sanction for this further slab of campaigning Sunday journalism was easily come by in the shape of the hundreds of Runaway Shelters that have sprung up in the last decade. 'My Dad beat me so hard it hurt all my life,' said

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Ronnie in the Galveston shelter. Ronnie's ma actually had to divorce pops to get her boy back, or so it seemed. We saw them driving away together into their dubious new life. The Runaway Hotline is for taking messages from little darlings too proud to call direct. They glean some i.d. and call their homes: 'Your birthday is June 5. Your maiden name is Squinto. Your Jimmy is safe. Any messages?' 'Not on your life!' goes Mum and off goes little Jimmy on the Oblivion Express. Americans don't seem to like their children very much after a certain age, which is strange since to the outside eye parents and children are indistinguishable and made for each other.

Such footling withers to luxury in the shrouded light that falls from the murder houses, death hospitals and unmarked graves left behind by the Junta in Buenos Aires and now on Panorama's **The Stolen Children of Argentina** (BBC-1). It seems that the Ubuesque regime was bent on obliterating two generations. What it did was kill its 'subversives' and sell the kids to a waiting list of more deserving personnel. Unfortunately for many of these beneficiaries of genocide, the grandparents of these transplanted children are fighting back. There is a National Commission. Seventeen children have so far been reunited with their families, 'no matter how happy they were'. A further 1,300 documented cases await the tortuous process.

We may say that men who imagined it was possible to handcuff a tortured woman to her labour bed, give away her child and push her into an unmarked grave were horror comic grotesques. But it is only the darker side of the ordinary political personality; the type that says, 'How *dare* you eat spinach. We can't *stand* spinach.' □

THEATRE
Susan Todd

Salesmanship

Black Ball Game
DON WEBB *Lyric*
Pygmalion
G.B. SHAW *Shaftesbury*
Phantom of the Opera
KEN HILL *Theatre Royal, Stratford East*

Black Ball Game draws so little on the armoury of powers unique to theatre that I wonder why it should pull an audience away from the latest telly sitcom. Its plot promisingly suggests the banquet of gleeful malice and accurate social savagery that a modern Ben Jonson might serve. Hardfaced but seedy and insolvent businessman Desmond (Michael Medwin) is greedily intent on winning a lucrative contract to select the brightest and best potential salesmen for an international corporation. The real work of selection and sales know-how, plus a higher degree of sarcastic sensitivity to the implications of buying and selling, reside with Des's sidekick John (Lee Walker). The fun begins, or should, when every sales manager's on-paper dream candidate turns out to be black. But the meat on the bone turns out to be a lot of liberated backchat about race, money, sex, the latter being neatly contained in a sub-plot about the pursuit of John by Mary (Carol Drinkwater).

With her airy manner and forward talk, Mary is meant to be wryly clear headed about herself, men and sex. Instead, the performer anxiously plays 'sexiness', regularly flashing stocking tops and overemphasising her perfectly adequate femininity. This is done, presumably, to neutralise any slight but real shock at the character's straightforward boldness. I cringed with the embarrassment born of witnessing performers' failures to rise above the crudest stereotypes; the piece suffers throughout from precisely this empty panache.

The verbal forms of a free humour which ought to make us laugh, by exposing the tensions in our own thinking about race, sex and money, are there but without the courage in writing or production to accelerate, to take risks, to chuck the jokes to hit us where it counts. Lee Walker is required to drive the play, and doesn't. Hugh Quarshie's foxy, ambitious salesman, Harry, is sharply played, while John Matshikiza's Mr O'Rourke strikes witty notes of amused contempt. It's a change to see two good parts for black actors. Both characters are articulate; central to the scenes they are in; not victims. But gaps, spaces and emptiness in production rhythms only make us more aware of hovering on the edge of vacuity.

Shaw couldn't have known that his outrageous socialist comedies would one day face audiences as passively unshockable as those seeing **Pygmalion** in 1984. Given his cavalier confrontationalism as dramatist, his fervour as egalitarian moralist, it seems unpleasantly ironic that he should have been, for so long now, appropriated by the richest, glossiest, most commercial production companies for what is called 'revival'. The term suggests the dead, but Shaw's work didn't die. It just got gobbled up, assimilated in the treacly repertoire of plays considered suitable as 'star vehicles'.

The Theatre of Comedy, in spite of being an up-market collective (of sorts) of mainly successful performers, controlling choice of material, director and production conditions, does not break far from this barren tradition. Under Ray Cooney's direction, its *Pygmalion* fails to refresh and regenerate our view of our greatest socialist playwright. But perhaps it is foolish to expect new perspectives from this quarter — and I should say that the evening, after a sticky first ten minutes, turns out entertaining. Better still, the play wins. The placidity of the Shaftesbury's audience was distinctly dissolved in rollicking laughter at the class, social and educational reversals that Shaw so blithely engineers. The wit of some of the key scenes emerges glorious and triumphant. Jackie Smith-Wood gets the measure of Eliza with firmness and clarity — fully holding her own with Peter O'Toole's Higgins.

He gives his audience what they've come for, with a good deal of generosity. As star, he weaves and lurches about the stage with fascinating angularity, folding and unfolding himself from the furniture. He exploits a charismatic sexuality to devastating effect, though at the expense of the sexually unfeeling, blindly self-regarding male character Shaw targeted. It is a real old-fashioned star performance and it gives the audience its money's worth, even as it throws out of balance dramatically the extended tussle, throughout the play, about all the possible forms of equality and inequality between men and women. John Thaw nicely balances Doolittle's explosive articulacy with an elusive whiff of some lost, authentic working-class voice. Joyce Carey's Mrs Higgins is a treasure.

The 'good time' which Stratford East still provides is shorthand for a theatrical ideal instilled by Joan Littlewood, which envisioned a theatre as an easy, pleasurable, organic extension of a community's life. **Phantom of the Opera** (a co-production with Tynewear Company, Newcastle) is a good night out, and the kind you can get only in a theatre.

In spite of having no intellectual pretensions whatever, it isn't stupid. Its musical humour is sly, often delicate, and nicely complemented by a robust line in verbal gags and a stylish line in visual ones. It draws wholly on light (and not so light) opera composers for its songs, making them work by having a communicative and merry company present them with great directness. In the effort to avoid remoteness, the company sometimes slips into imprecision and over-friendliness but, for the most part, treads with sound judgment the line between vigorous melodramatic intensity and humour.

The story itself still trails wisps of glory from its film versions and, in the practised hands of 'horrormime' creator and director Ken Hill, I suspect that a lot of odd elements are recovered and exploited from Gaston Leroux's 1900 thriller. The design by Sarah-Jane McClelland mixes magical effects with European art-nouveau decoration and impressively unifies the material. The evening lets you re-enter childhood's love of scary spooks and, at moments, handles with real pathos the essential myth of the sad, bad monster. □

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2823 **Set by Mercy Dash**
Compers are offered the opportunity to pay tribute to Sir John Betjeman who died last week. Poetic epitaphs, or comments on the Poet Laureateship, please, both after the style of Sir John. By 8 June.

No 2820 **Set by A. Boteman**
Fiction, drama or poetry affected by recent Arts Council decisions.

Report **By Di Dact**
A small and unenthusiastic entry. Compers must pull their socks up and *try* harder even if they find the task in hand difficult. I will admit that the examiners—I mean setters—might have done better to choose a more specific question. But that is no excuse. You ought to have seen it as a challenge to your imaginations instead of dashing off sloppy work before skiving off to watch snooker or water the garden or whatever. Thinking dramatically proved the most creative

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tactic. Comparatively highly commended those printed—and eight pounds each.

Dear Mr Pavarotti,
Thank you for being so understanding about the booking of your dressing-room on the 21st. I fear the Rotarians pay rather well, so we cannot afford to refuse. A daughter of one of the stage-hands is lending her Painting-by-Numbers set so Cavaradossi will no longer lack his Act I props.

On the evenings when you are not singing we are having to ask you to man the gentlemen's cloakroom in the stalls entrance. I'm afraid that Miss Caballe wrote in early and has already bagged the ice-cream selling pitch that you asked for. Mr Nureyev, whom you met last time, will be doing the same job on the nights when you are playing.

The postal order for your fee is in the post.

Thanks again,

Kiri Te Kanawa

Hon. Sec. to the General Administrator

DIDO BAGSHAW

The sound of marching elephants fills the theatre. Hannibal, in a simple tabard bearing the logo of Alpine Travel, the play's sponsor, makes his way on to a bare stage from the back of the auditorium (where he has been selling tickets to late-comers).

Hannibal: Halt! (*The elephants stop*) Would that you could see them! 40,000 men and all those elephants! Where would I be without them? But the maintenance of essential strategic arms like these needs money, and the money is in Rome so I must go to Rome. (*Exits left*)

Hannibal: *(Off, in a gruff voice)* Sire, sire! The elephants are restive! (*Makes trumpeting sound*)

Hannibal: (*Backing on again*) Patience, my man. Our goal is in sight. (*Exits right and clashes several swords together*)

Hannibal: (*Off, in Italian accent*) Hey, Marcus! See whadda we got here! The barbarians are a-coming!

N.J. WARBURTON

From Melvyn Bragg's next novel:
Luke Fellwalker clambered up the outcrop of grey, uncompromising rock and gazed down at his native Cumbrian village. It seemed an age since he had left this safe womb for the dangerous, bohemian life of a writer, though in fact it was barely 25 years.

'Tha's niver be patherin' nor scrampin' fer nowt up 'ere, lad,' panted his father behind him. 'No dad,' he replied, wondering vaguely what the old bastard was talking about. His father had never wanted him to leave—had opposed it bitterly in fact. Without that Arts Council grant he could never have even raised the train fare to London. It had emancipated him from the ghastly grittiness of his background, enabled him to live in the metropolis and write about that instead. And now he was back. The money had suddenly, inexplicably dried up. What would the future be like as a junior clerk in his father's rat-catching business?

PETER NORMAN

The Poet Laments the Discontinuation of His Arts Council Grant
I'm already in debt
and not halfway yet
with my free-verse drama
about Sri Lanka's post-colonial trauma,
so I've had to join the bards
who write verses in those cards
people find better
than penning a letter;
I've even done condolences that rhymed 'passed over'
with 'in clover'.
My problem? Now I can't write in blank verse.
Worse:
My Sri Lanka
has a franker banker with a danker tanker
and, nursing his ranker canker,
a lanker bloody wanker.

MARGARET ROGERS

FIRST PERSON

Alison Hennegan

Body politic

AT LEAST ONE of my friends is already dreading the approach of Wimbledon. She loves tennis but hates the prospect of her eight-year-old son watching this season's crop of loud-mouthed brats throwing tantrums.

She shudders at the knowledge that commentators, by their tone of world-weary amusement, will encourage him to view the McEnroes tolerantly; that umpires, by consenting to have their decisions overturned, will teach him that he who stamps hardest gets his own way; and that twittering tiers of teenage girls will suggest to him, by the cries of adoration with which they urge on their slobbish darlings, that general loutishness combined with an unusual degree of muscular coordination is the surest way to female hearts.

Where, my friend asks plaintively, is her son to find genuinely admirable male role models in today's world of sport? Where indeed? And what with murder on the terraces and the BMA's recent statement that serious injury in all 'contact' sports is increasing at an alarming rate and the apparently calm acceptance of helmets as essential equipment for today's cricketers, I really do see her problem.

Violence among both players and spectators is becoming increasingly commonplace. Some argue that sport simply takes on the predominant aspects of the age. Ours is a violent one and so, therefore, is our sport. A tempting explanation, but wrong. All competitive sport is essentially violent. It's about Victory and Defeat: I can win only if you lose and lose you therefore must.

The violence may be psychological only, but it's always there. It's the expression in sport of what the gloomier philosophers might call the old Adam: unregenerate, post-lapsarian, Hobbesian humanity, very nasty and very brutal.

Late Victorian headmasters, being among life's pessimists (or realists, depending on your point of view) despaired of driving the old Adam off the field but determined that he should at least be curbed there. He might be a brute but that was no reason to allow him to behave like one.

We mock those Victorians for their insistence that there are things more important for athletes than winning. We scorn them for their vision of Life as a Game which must be played fairly, bravely and generously. We assume, wrongly, that they therefore underestimated the seriousness of life, overestimated the importance of sport.

We forget they had left not very far behind them a world in which men slogged themselves to death in bare-knuckle fights lasting sometimes eight hours, a world faithfully replicated by admiring schoolboys, some of whom also died in emulation of their heroes, and a world in which the ability to endure physically brutal treatment was the quality most demanded in sport.

We condemn them for their distinction between (amateur) Gentlemen and (professional) Players, assuming, as we tend to, that considerations of caste alone determined the divide.

In fact, in human terms they recognised that a Player could be a gentleman and a Gentleman could be a blackguard. What they suspected was that there could be no such thing as Clean Money in professional sport. And when the BMA states that 'the pressure of "big business" is the most formidable obstacle to the banning of [brain damaging] boxing' (NS 11 May) and when cigarette manufacturers buy their way ever deeper into sports sponsorships, who are we to call those Victorians fools?

THEY SAW MORE clearly than we sometimes allow ourselves to do that distinctions between life and sport are usually spurious. They recognised that if your side — be it village, school, firm or nation-state — aims to win at any cost, by cheating, maiming, bribing, intimidating, that is the sort of side you are, on and off the field (*vide* Zola Budd). They got only half the answer right. They sought to channel and transform the violence at the heart of competition rather than questioning competition itself. But at least they insisted that a graceless and crowing win was worth less than a cheerfully and courageously sustained defeat. Not all athletes always met that standard. Some, such as W.G. Grace, fell notoriously short of it. But the standard itself was unambiguous and real.

Their belief that it matters less whether you win or lose than how you play the game may now draw nothing more than a ribald jeer. But if so, it's worth asking why.

The brutality they sought to check, did briefly succeed in checking, is back, sometimes in supersubtle forms befitting our own tortuous age: as in the masochistic self-hatred and basically fear-filled contempt for the body exemplified in athletes' attempts to push harder and harder against the pain barrier; as in chemical interference with the physical maturation of girl athletes. The body itself has become the rival competitor to be punished, humiliated, subdued and, if needs must, destroyed.

Some will argue that excesses such as these arise only because 'politics' and the interest of fiercely rival nations have 'got mixed up' with sport. But competitive sports must always be political inasmuch as they elevate an uncompromisingly adversarial mode over a cooperative one. They are tolerable only if those participating acquire and demonstrate the capacity to accept both victory and defeat graciously — and only if spectators refuse to seek, applaud or settle for anything less.

And should you wish to tell me that my sentiments are appropriate only for a Victorian Headmaster's Sunday sermon, I'm neither alarmed, abashed nor apologetic. Contrary to much popular wisdom, those Victorians didn't get *every* thing wrong.

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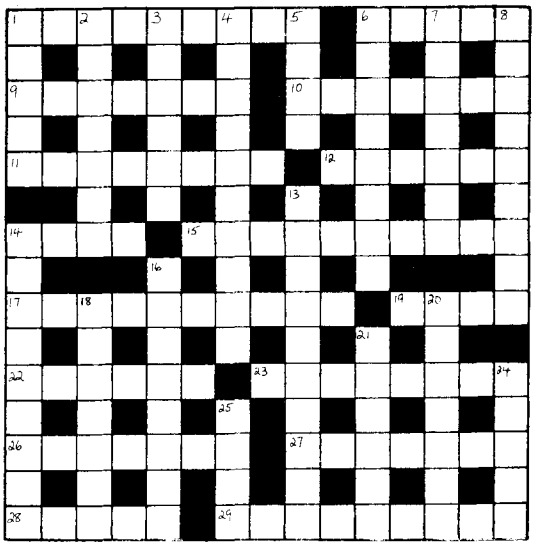
Weekend Crossword 1441

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1441, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 5 June.



Name _____

Address _____

_____

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ACROSS

1 Animal returns holding a strip of leather for a small creature (9)
6 Refuse to cut an inch of a bird (5)
9 Spoil what is bad in a piece of literature (7)
10 Provide me with a scoop to put a story together (7)
11. All codes when deciphered are given this name (8)
12. Go where there are bulls to get such injury (6)
14. Not being 28, the former statesman has nothing for us (4)
15. Sons matter terribly although they are a mixed bag (10)
17. Flippancy is essentially about a single focus of loyalty (10)
19. Having lost his head the amateur is finished (4)
22. Value opposite of what the West never does (6)
23. Records of a roguish saint (8)
26. Hurrying to make the drink on the gas? (7)
27. It is like a ring to abolish a right (7)
28. Man in the street it used to provide for (5)
29. Boffin's secretary (9)

DOWN

1 Stares like a copy-cat in school (5)
2 It is thus permissible to make advances (7)
3 Genuinely make friends anew (6)
4 Gripping, and thus disturbing her in sleep (10)
5 It is a poor score, so get your head down (4)
6 Pleasures obtained from getting entangled in beds (8)
7 Poison which may be concocted to eat in company (7)
8 Part of army carried in plane or vessel (9)
13 Pursuer to deposit money in dangerous place for sailors (6,4)
14 Apprentice makes a knocker with a bird on (9)
16 Exhausts one as a prophet (8)
18 Draw back when Jimmy comes up to begin with (7)
20 Composer of three girls (7)
21 Songs about a part of England (6)
24 She is in love with a commissar ahead of time (5)
25 Among you French he would become energetic (4)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1439

B	A	S	T	A	R	D	S	■	F	R	I	G	H	T
U	■	P	■	B	■	I	■	■	■	I	■	R	■	R
T	O	U	L	O	U	S	E	■	A	G	N	A	T	E
T	■	R	■	U	■	C	■	G	■	O	■	D	■	A
E	I	G	H	T	H	O	U	R	■	L	A	I	R	D
R	■	E	■	■	■	N	■	A	■	E	■	E	■	L
■	■	■	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	T	E	N	S	E
S	■	D	■	E	■	O	■	D	■	T	■	T	■	S
E	P	I	T	H	A	L	A	M	I	O	N	■	■	■
R	■	S	■	A	■	A	■	A	■	■	■	R	■	V
A	M	A	S	S	■	T	I	S	I	P	H	O	N	E
P	■	S	■	H	■	E	■	T	■	I	■	A	■	S
H	A	T	P	I	N	■	C	E	N	T	I	M	E	S
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M	I	R	A	G	E	■	A	S	P	H	O	D	E	L

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BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JP.
Telephone: 01-387 4499

Closing date 4 June 1984.

THE LABOUR PARTY
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Applicants must, therefore, have a good understanding and knowledge of economics — and of economic, financial and taxation policy issues — as well as experience in preparing papers and briefing on these issues. An Honours Degree, though not essential, would be a considerable advantage.

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Application forms and further details are obtainable from: **The Administrative and Personnel Officer, The Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT, and completed application forms should be returned by no later than FRIDAY, 8 JUNE 1984.**

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APPOINTMENTS

DORA RUSSELL urgently needs housekeeper in Cornwall. Light duties but commitment essential. Couple considered. Terms by arrangement. For details phone Mrs Ward 0787-210980 after 27 May.

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKER

The Battersea & Wandsworth Irish Committee, which was formed in late 1983 to promote Irish activity in the Borough, as part of our anti-racist strategy, requires until end May 1985 a worker to carry out three main functions. To organise the Committee's programme of activity which includes bringing from Ireland theatre groups, musicians, etc., organising a major political debate and a weekend seminar on Irish in London issues; develop a Boroughwide network of Irish groups and persons, with emphasis on the needs of women, on an ongoing basis; and work with the social problems in the Irish community.

The person required will have a commitment to and knowledge of the Irish community, including the second generation, and its needs; will have knowledge of community work and understand officialdom; be a good organiser; be able to work on own initiative; and do own typing and administration. *The post is suitable for job sharing.* **Wage: £179 per week inclusive of London Weighting.**

Please apply in writing with details of c.v. by 2 June 1984 to

The Convenor, BWIC, c/o The Junction Resource Centre, 248 Lavender Hill, London SW11.

For further information telephone **01-228 2327.**

The BWIC is supported by the GLC.

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Further details from:

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GROUPS/ MEETINGS

SACU WOMEN'S TOUR OF CHINA. Planning meeting for 1985 Women's Tour of China. All Welcome. Saturday 2 June 2.30 p.m. At Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding, 152 Camden High St, London NW1 0NE. Tel. 01-267 9841.

SOCIALISTS NEED awareness of Fifth Natural Kingdom's assistance to the Fourth (Humanity). Talks and questions Medhope, Tintern (029 8 253) Gwent. Next weekend 8/10 June.

THEOSOPHY: S.A.E. for free pamphlets, book list, Programme of activities. Sunday 27 May 8 pm Informal Q/A Meeting. 'The Bhagavad Gita as Yoga'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

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01-404 5486
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CONFERENCE

EMBRACE THE EARTH', Conference Manchester 16-17 June. A Green View of Peace. Details: 14 Alexandra Road, Oxford.

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SOUTH CHINA AND SICHUAN. 4-26 August. £1,400 inclusive with national guide. Small independent group needs one/two more people. Phone Ros Barker, 01-289 3042 or 289 3012 or write 119 Elgin Avenue, London W9.

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LISTINGS

FRI 25 MAY

LONDON 'Sandino's Birthday Party' — Benefit for Nicaragua. 8.30pm to midnight University of London Union, Malet St, WC1. Music by Holloway All Stars, Nicaraguan disco. Latin American food; bar. £3.50/£2.50 unwaged. **Org Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign.**

LONDON 'Book-keeping, budgeting and accounts — 2-day course for workers in community grps and voluntary orgs. Mary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Sq, WC1. **Details: Julia Lodge 01-831 7079.**

COVENTRY Christian CND Torchlight procession from Cathedral old ruins through precinct. Starts 8.30pm. Followed by service in Cathedral and vigil till dawn. **Details: Julia Lodge 021-475 3213.**

SAT 26 MAY

COVENTRY CND March and Rally. March: assemble 11.30am at Hearsall Common, Hearsall La. ('Free Europe from Nuclear Weapons') or Edgwick Pk, Foleshill Rd ('International Understanding') or Stoke Green, Binley Rd ('Work for Peace — Jobs Not Bombs'). Rally: Memorial Park, 2-5pm. Spkrs Joan Ruddock, E.P. Thompson, Lynne Jones, Ron Todd, Slene Stikwerda (Dutch IKV), Alan Bleasdale. Stalls, children's area & theatre, music, dance.

BATTERSEA Battersea CND meet 8.45am main entrance Clapham Junction sta. for national demo in Coventry. **Details: Nick 01-228 4906.**

COVENTRY CND rock concert. 8pm-11pm Apollo Theatre, Hales St. Style Council, General Public. Tickets £5.00 (£4.50 UB40). Bookings Apollo box office 0203 56122. Doors open 7pm.

ISLINGTON 'Bread Not Bombs' exhibition at Islington Green.

MON 28 MAY

COVENTRY Multi-cultural festival, Coventry Cathedral ruins. 12 noon-5pm. Music, theatre, dance. **Org W. Midlands CND.**

TUES 29 MAY

LONDON Tower Hamlets Equality & Race. 7.30pm 178 Whitechapel Rd, E1. Spkr Russell Profitt. **Org Tower Hamlets Fabian Society.**

WED 30 MAY

EPPING Public meeting. Spkr Joan Ruddock. 8pm Treetops Hotel, Epping. **Details: David Tetlow 01-508 6221 (W) Epping 78583 (H). Org Epping & Ongar CND.**

LONDON 'Democracy & Social Organisation'. One of a series of discussions on Cuba Today. 7.30pm Cock Tavern, 23 Phoenix Rd, NW1. Entrance free. **Org Britain-Cuba Resource Centre.**

THURS 31 MAY

GARSTON Seminar: 'NHS Consumers — Do the Managers Listen?' 10am to 3.30pm Garston Manor Rehabilitation Centre, High Elms Lane, Garston, nr Watford. **For members & staff of CHCs and DHAs. Details: Barry Taylor, Watford 45285.**

LONDON Support the Miners Rally. 7.30pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1. Spkrs Mick McGahey, Gordon McLennan, Jean Miller. Entrance by donation of non-perishable food. **Org Communist Party.**

LONDON 'Government Secrecy after the Bettaney Case', spkrs Michael Mansfield, Helena Kennedy, Rodney Austin. 7pm Natl Inst for Social Work, 5 Tavistock Place, WC1. **Org Central London Legal Action Group.**

FRI 1 JUNE

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE Days of Hope Bookshop Dance & Social. 8pm Guildhall, Quayside, Newcastle. Brighton Palais Orchestra, the Big Band, the Wobblies. Tickets from Days of Hope, 115 Westgate Rd and on door, £2.50/£1.25 unwaged.

ACTON Jumble Sale. 6.30pm Old People's Luncheon Club, Acton High St, W3. Details: 01-993 3240. **Org Acton CND.**

SAT 2 JUNE

LONDON 1984 National Homeworking Conf. — International Perspectives, Trade Unions, work of local projects. Day conf. County Hall, SE1. **Details: 01-633 1493.**

ISLINGTON 'Barrio Latino', Latin American food/bar. 7-12pm Islington Town Hall. £3. **Bookings 01-359 2270. Colombian Cttee-Carila.**

LONDON 2nd Pam Smith Memorial Lecture by Sue Holland 'Loss, Rage and Oppression', neighbourhood psychotherapy with working-class, black and minority women. 2pm Poly of N London, Ladbroke Hse, 62-66 Highbury Grove, N5. £1/50p unwaged. Tea/creche. **Details: Esther Saraga 01-607 2789/Sue Einhorn 01-607 2789.**

London Conference on European Socialist Strategy. 'No to the Treaty of Rome, No to British Nationalism, Yes to a united Socialist Europe!' Spkrs include Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, Fred Halliday, John Palmer. £3 pre-reg/£4 on day/£1 unwaged. Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, N19. Creche, refreshments. 10.30-5pm. **Details: Socialist Society, 9 Poland St, W1, 01-734 8501.**

LONDON 'No to Botha! No to apartheid!' Assemble 11.45 Speakers Corner to march to Whitehall and Downing St. **Org Anti-Apartheid Movement.**

LETCHWORTH Herts. 'Ecology and the Labour Movement'. Spkr Raymond Williams. 3pm Plinston Hall, The Broadway, Letchworth. **Org N. Herts SERA.**

SUN 3 JUNE

WEMBLEY A Night for a Nuclear-Free Europe. 7.30pm Wembley Conference Centre. Supported by the Socialist Group of the European Parliament. With Tracey Ullman, Julie Walters, Rik Mayall, Aswad & many others. **Org Labour Movement Services. Enquiries 01-267 6722**

FORTHCOMING

7 JUNE LONDON 'Unemployment, volunteering and the Government' ARVAC Seminar 2-5pm National Children's Bureau, 8 Wakeley St, EC1. Fee £3.50/£4.50 non-mems/£2 unwaged. **Details & enrolment: Pat Marsden, ARVAC, 26 Queen's Rd, Wivenhoe, Essex CO7 9JH. 0206 225344.**

9 JUNE LONDON Workshop to produce Anti-Racist teaching materials. Of interest to teachers in FE and AE, YTS and schools. Bring materials. 10-4pm Paddington College, Paddington Green, W2.

9 JUNE BIRMINGHAM Labour Party Black Sections, one-day conf. to discuss draft constitution for black sections to represent all black people in Labour Party. 10.30am Digbeth Civic Hall. **Details: 39 Chippenham Rd, London, W9. 01-286 9692/221 7050.**

10 JUNE GARTREE Picket in support of and in solidarity with Irish Republican prisoners in Gartree Prison, 1-3pm.

13 JUNE DARLINGTON 'Jobs Not Bombs' meeting with Jimmy Knapp, Gen. Sec. NUR, Roland Boyes MEP, Mick Elliott, CND. 7.30pm. Dolphin Centre, Horsemarket. **Org Darlington Peace Action & Trades Council. 0325 465556.**

16 JUNE BIRMINGHAM Dayschool on Palestine. 10.30 Digbeth Civic Hall. 'Labour and Likud', 'The PLO Today', 'Life inside the Green Line'. **Org B'ham Solidarity Campaign with the Palestinian People.**

16-17 JUNE LONDON 'Women Count — Count Women's Work'. Camden Centre, Camden Town Hall, NW1. **Details: Conference Cttee, King's X Women's Centre, 71 Tonbridge St, WC1. 01-837 7509.**

16-17 MANCHESTER 'A Green View of Peace' conf. **Contact Green CND, 14 Alexandra Rd, Oxford. 0865 246079.**

17 JUNE LONDON Launch Meeting of OUTRIGHTS Campaign to get people out of mental handicap hospitals. 3pm Drill Hall, 16 Chenies St, WC1. Adm free. **Details: Pete Shelton, OUTRIGHTS, 16 Chenies St, WC1. 01-631 4468.**

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ATTRACTIVE, PROFESSIONAL man (58), loves arts, seeks attractive, sensual non-smoking woman, slim/medium (any age to 53), any race/circumstances for warm friendship/enjoyments. Pref. London/surrounding areas. Box 8080.

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FRIENDLY, 30, Guitar-playing, theatre-going, anti-Thatcherist, somewhat stultified in London, northern man, still working on life's conundrum, seeks unceremonious, warm woman friend. Box 8339.

GREATER MANCHESTER, graduate male, 36, single, enjoys theatre, music, books, walking, politics, seeks female friend, 25-35, with sense of humour, to share interests. Box 8434.

HOLIDAY IN FRANCE. Bourgeois Gentilhomme, non socialist, seeks lively, sophisticated lady, forties, to share leisurely 2/3 week car tour through French countryside this summer. Box 8396.

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warm, 30-ish, gentle (possibly spiritual) but independent, urbane but hungry for simplicity, intellectual but quite without pretension, aware of diet and its influence and therefore slim, stable, fit and naturally beautiful... then your missing male could now — just possibly — be one letter/photo away.
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LADY SEEKS intelligent, thoughtful Asian gentleman 40ish, for genuine, caring friendship. London area. Box 8342.

LEFTIST MALE Indian academic, 40s, warm, caring, seeks similar vivacious, intelligent woman young to fifty, friendship, share interests, Manchester area. Box 8427.

LONDON POND Frog (David, 36) awaits his Princess. All nice ladies up to 5'6" are eligible to realise this fairy tale. Box 8409.

MALE, EARLY 50s, separated (4 years) with interests: travel, walking, cinema, theatre, seeks like minded female — East Anglia/Home Counties, Box 8436.

MAN, 31, independent minded, humorous disposition, socialist, seeks unconventional strong woman, for occasional friendly encounters. Preferably North-East or Cumbria; interested politics or music. Box 8394.

MIDDLE-AGED, medium height, semi-attached Editor/Writer, having lost direction after serious illness, seeks intelligent, very physical younger woman, to help him regain his identity and share love of the arts & the senses, in non-oppressive relationship. Kent/E. Sussex/London areas. Box 8399.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN, graduate, left-wing, North London, wants company for August holiday — Asia? Africa? Anywhere? Own expenses. Either sex — but preferably interested in history, music, books, *countryside; if male, tall.* Box 8419.

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PROFESSIONAL WOMAN London, mid-forties, seeks professional man, sense humour, share arts, cinema, classical music, travel, wining, dining. Box 8273.

SEPARATED WOMAN of 30, mother, student, scatterbrain, would like to meet a man to enjoy life with. Returnable photo appreciated. Box 8401.

SHEFFIELD: ATTRACTIVE, divorced, early 30s graduate in professional job with varied interests including theatre, cinema, travel seeks the company of sincere professional man late 30s. Box 8338.

SOCIALIST-FEMINIST academic, interests: politics, theatre, literature, seeks like-minded male 30-45. London. Box 8426.

SOCIALIST FEMINIST, 34, learning to relate as well as define; interested: growth, reggae, folk, politics, theatre, painting, hills. Seeks compatible man for shared discoveries. Midlands. Box 8433.

TALL, SLIM black guy, 25, enjoys theatre and cinema, seeks lady, age, size, nationality unimportant. Box 8424.

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WARM, INTELLIGENT man, attached, 46, seeks woman 30-50, to share weekends/holidays etc. Wide interests: politics, books, country. East Midlands/London. Box 8390.

WOMAN, VERY late 30s, enjoys food, reading and other sedentary occupations, has her active moments, seeks large, cheerful, affectionate man living in North West. Box 8405.

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